Q64

FIRST LOOK!
ACCLAIM'S

SOUTH PARK

SPECIAL HOLIDAY ISSUE

"IT'S ALL IN THE WRIST."

[OR IN THE JUGULAR IF IT'S A QUICK DEATH YOU'RE GOING FOR.]

— Mace Daniels

YOU DRIVE A TANK.
YOU DESTROY MAJOR CITIES.
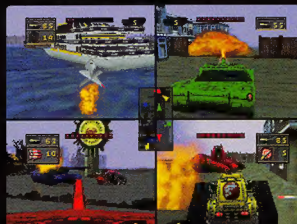YOU RESCUE BEAUTIFUL WOMEN.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF

BATTLETANX

Destroy well-known cities including:
Chicago, New York, Las Vegas & San Francisco.

The ultimate in tank warfare. 17 levels. 12 enemy Tribes. Over 1,000 intense battles.

Up to 4 player action, with split and quad screen modes. Supports Rumble Pak.™

It's the year 2001. The world has endured a nuclear holocaust. 99% of Earth's females are dead. The surviving few have risen to the status of QueenLords, holy entities, and the only means to mankind's survival. BattleTanx™ thrusts you into the role of BattleLord, master of armored tank warfare. You rumble across post-apocalypse America, leveling cities and destroying roving gangs of desperate Tribesmen - all in an effort to save the QueenLords, and civilization itself.

- Awesome 3D action & spectacular weapons effects: guided missiles, lasers, swarmer missiles, nuclear weapons & more.

- 4 types of furious 3D gameplay - BattleLord, Death Match, Annihilation & Campaign.

- 3 camera views - First person, third person and the fortress railgun.

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

NINTENDO 64

3DO™
www.3do.com

CONTENTS

*"SOUTH PARK" AND THE SOUTH PARK CHARACTERS ARE
TRADEMARKS OF COMEDY CENTRAL.© 1998

STUFF WE THINK ABOUT

The holiday season has arrived and, with it, a wealth of new games for the Nintendo 64. The holiday season is a time when many parents, grandparents, friends, and relatives head to the malls across America to look for that special gift. Well, since most of you reading this issue of Q64 own a Nintendo 64, then you'll want that gift to be a video game, and not just any ol' game. That's why, with our 78 page review section, you can use this issue of Q64 to help you decide which games to put on your wish list and which ones to stay away from.

Last fall, I gave you all a foreshadowing of what was to come — and as you read through this issue of Q64, you'll find out just how clairvoyant I am! In this issue, we have reviewed almost as many games as we did in the past two issues combined, and we had to leave out a couple of reviews because we just couldn't put any more into the 100+ pages you hold in your hands. Besides, there are still more great games coming out during the first few months of 1999, and we needed the room to showcase them. Ubi Soft, the company responsible for the wonderfully playable SCARS and Buck Bumble (both reviewed inside), has the incredible Rayman 2 lined up for an early '99 release — be sure to check out our "Exclusive" report on this amazing game. Also, previewed in our Future Play section are two titles from Activision that are sure to get lots of attention — Vigilante 8 and Nightmare Creatures. Titus and Konami also have two hot new games each previewed (Superman, Roadsters 98, & Castlevania, Survivor: Day One, respectively). Ocean has another Infogrames (Mission: Impossible) title, Star Shot, that is sure to grab your attention, and 3DO has possibly the most amazing four player game ever created in Battle Tanx! Rounding out the list of Future Play games is a reborn classic from Big Bang Software called Lode Runner 64, and updates on Ubi Soft's Tonic Trouble and Acclaim's Shadowman.

Our cover story this month features Acclaim's South Park. Based on the popular "mature audience" cartoon on the Comedy Central channel, this game looks to bring an older audience to the N64. The game is played out in a third person perspective, and uses the Turok 2 engine (you can find out more about this game by turning to page 12).

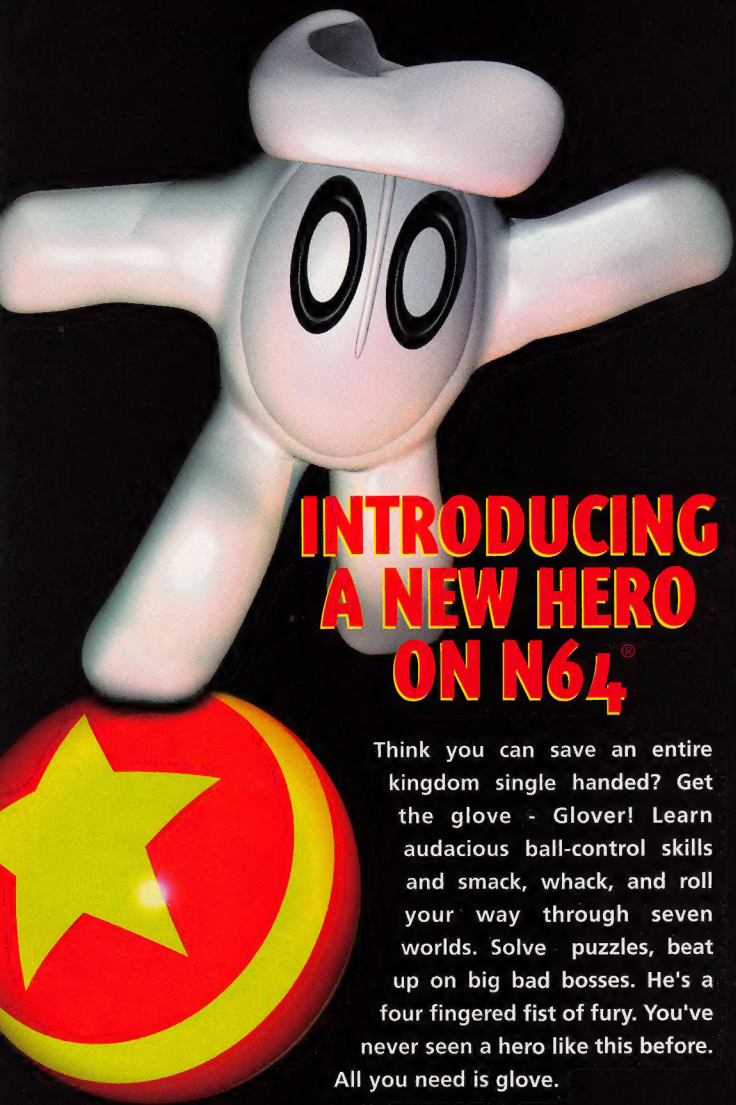Enjoy the holidays, play lots of games, and we'll see you in the Spring!

ERIC

The secretary will call you an ambulance as soon as she dislodges her head from your radiator.

RUSH 2

Extreme Racing USA

TOP 10 TRST

BEST SELLING NINTENDO 64 TITLES

September, 1998

Nintendo's
Goldeneye 007

1
last month **3**
average retail price
$40

9

Acclaim's
WWF Warzone

2
last month **1**
average retail price
$60

8

Nintendo's
Banjo-Kazooie

3
last month **2**
average retail price
$50

8

Midway's
NFL Blitz

4
last month ******
average retail price
$60

9

EA's
Madden NFL 99

5
last month ******
average retail price
$52

7

EA's
Nascar 99

6
last month ******
average retail price
$51

8

THQ's
WCW vs NWO: World Tour

7
last month ******
average retail price
$40

8

Nintendo's
Super Mario 64

8
last month **6**
average retail price
$40

NR
NOT RATED

Nintendo's
Mario Kart 64

9
last month **7**
average retail price
$40

8

Infogrames'
Mission Impossible
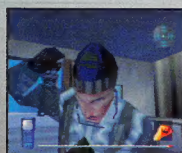
10
last month **5**
average retail price
$61

8

** Not in Top 10 Last Month

SELECT KID

CARTMAN KYLE STAN KENNY

SOUTH PARK

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE TO PLAY YOUR NINTENDO 64, ACCLAIM UNLEASHES SOUTH PARK, ONE OF THE MOST ANTICIPATED VIDEO GAMES IN RECENT MEMORY. BASED ON THE HIT COMEDY CENTRAL TV SHOW, SOUTH PARK THE VIDEO GAME WILL HAVE GAMERS WORKING OVERTIME TO SAVE THE TOWN FROM LUNATIC TURKEYS THAT HAVE GONE BESERK. A MYSTERIOUS COMET THAT APPROACHES ONCE EVERY 666 YEARS IS HEADED TOWARD THE TOWN, CAUSING ALL SORTS OF MAYHEM. THE TURKEYS ARE REVOLTING, CARTMAN'S MOM IS KIDNAPPED BY ALIENS, AND THE SON OF SKUZZLEBUTT IS OUT OF CONTROL. KYLE, CARTMAN, STAN, AND KENNY HAVE TO SAVE THE DAY, ARMED WITH A HOST OF GADGETS, RANGING FROM COW LAUNCHERS TO FART DOLLS, AND JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING INBETWEEN! AND, ALL OF THIS FANTASTIC ACTION TAKES PLACE IN LIFE-LIKE 3D. NOW, FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, YOU CAN SEE JUST HOW ROUND CARTMAN REALLY IS (AND BIG GAY AL, FOR THAT MATTER).

ACCLAIM'S SOUTH PARK IS REALLY TWO GAMES IN ONE CARTRIDGE SIZED PACKAGE. IN THE ONE PLAYER MODE, THE OBJECT IS TO COMPLETE EACH OF THE SIX MISSION BASED EPISODES, AS YOU MOVE YOUR ONSCREEN KENNY (OR CARTMAN, STAN, OR KYLE, IF YOU PREFER) THROUGH ENVIRONMENTS THAT LOOK JUST LIKE THE SHOW! THE GAME IS PLAYED OUT IN THIRD PERSON PERSPECTIVE, MUCH LIKE ANOTHER ACCLAIM BEST SELLER, TUROK. IN FACT, FOR THOSE OF YOU THAT DIDN'T ALREADY KNOW, SOUTH PARK THE VIDEO GAME USES THE TUROK 2 ENGINE THAT WAS DEVELOPED BY THE STUDS AT IGUANA (TUROK,

NFL QB Club, All-Star Baseball), and the basic play mechanics are the same (except, you're running through the town of South Park instead of through steamy, African jungles). Much like with Turok, the emphasis in South Park is on the different types of weapons and power-ups, so to is that theme carried out in South Park. There are over a dozen different kinds of "gadgets" to use, some more devastating than others. There's the aforementioned cow launcher, as well as an Auto Egger that fires live chickens! But wait, there's more, plenty more, but you'll have to wait until next issue to find out what they are!

As you wander through the streets of South Park, you'll encounter many familiar sights (assuming you are familiar with the show, that is). There's Jimbo's Gun(s) store, South Park Elementary, Tom's Rhinoplasty, City Hall, the Post Office, the Book Depository, and even more. Besides the four main characters (Kenny, Kyle, Cartman, and Stan), South Park the video game also features a host of classic supporting characters: Terrance & Phillip, Big Gay Al, Mr. Garrison (and Mr. Hat), Mephisto, Officer Barbrady, Mr. Mayor, the Chef, and more!

The multi-player mode is your basic Quake style free-for-all. Pick a character, then go at it with up to three of your friends and play in 5 different game modes, including Capture the Flag, Grudge Match, and Kick the Baby. The glorious part of all this mayhem is that Acclaim had Comedy Central use sound bites from the characters that were designed specifically for the game! Kenny's mumbles, Cartman's dim wit, and Kyle's one-liners are all new and all very much in-tune with their TV show personalities.

As you can clearly see from the surounding screen shots, South Park the video game has a wonderfully authentic look to it, despite the fact that the characters are in 3D. The animators at Iguana have done a nice job of making the characters "walk" and move just like their 2D counterparts in the show. And, as you may have guessed, simply from your awareness of the cartoon, South Park the video game will be rated for "Mature" audiences (although that may be more of an age requirement than an actual psychological profile — otherwise few of us would be allowed to buy the game). **ERIC**

EXCLUSIVE Q64

UBI SOFT'S

RAYMAN 2
THE GREAT ESCAPE

Q64 recently had a chance to meet the man behind Rayman 2, Michel Ancel, at Ubi Soft's Montpellier, France, studio. We spoke about many gameplay issues, and more importantly, what Rayman 2 will be all about.

Q64 – How will you let game players know what kind of moves your Rayman can perform?

MA – There's a learning map at the start of the game, and the player can't move on to the game itself if he hasn't mastered all the movements, as well as Rayman's first skills and powers. As soon as he is more at ease with the character (the controls are really intuitive), he leaves the map and the adventure can begin. If he doesn't succeed after 5 minutes, a virus is automatically generated which erases the hard disk and socks him one as an extra bonus. But seriously, the map is really simple.

Q64 – Is an analog stick vital for 3D platform games?

MA – When the controls are similar to Mario or Banjo, we think it's really useful. We opted for it with Rayman 2. Player reactions are really put to the test in Rayman 2, and the analog stick is a real comfort for the player. But of course it's possible to play Rayman 2 with a pad and without a stick, as well as on the keyboard in the PC version. Anyway, we think the analog stick introduces a really sexy element into 3D games.

Q64 – How will you keep players working through your game?

MA – The basic principle of Rayman 2 is to force the player to move quickly through the maps. Speed and intensity are at the root of Rayman 2. This makes it really different from all the other 3D games where the player can spend hours wandering through immense worlds where there is nothing for him to do except admire the scenery. In Rayman 2, the player hasn't a second to waste because everything keeps collapsing behind him, because he is riding this strange animal or because he is pressed for time, lack of oxygen or by strong winds.

Q64 – Can adding new skills seem like a token gesture? What interesting skills will you be implementing in Rayman 2?

MA – Giving the hero new skills in the course of the game isn't an essential phase, but it adds a lot of depth to action and adventure games. The player derives positive pleasure from revisiting universes and discovering hidden doors and levels that were inaccessible until he acquired some special power. He can then enjoy the beauty of the universe, the special effects, all the details he couldn't appreciate first time round because he was driven by the tension and intensity of the game.

Compared to his first incarnation, Rayman has become a veritable athlete, he jumps every which way, rolls about the place and somersaults, flies a helicopter, climbs trees and walls, swings from nets over precipices, swims underwater (and does a good job of it too!). He also rides strange beasts that take him through the maps at incredible speeds. Besides, his projectile has acquired lots of different uses: not only is it a veritable weapon that he can use to strafe the enemy but it is also a grapnel, a lasso and even as a rather special means of
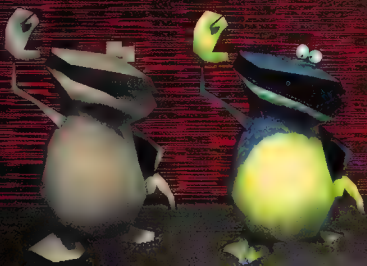
transport (but enough said about that)

Q64 — Will you base level progression on a series of courses (like most 2D games) or on open-ended worlds? What led to your decision?

MA — We were determined to avoid the major shortcoming of 3D which, if the worlds are too open, leads to a slack game where, even if the immersion is successful, the player isn't really sure what he's supposed to be doing because the action plods along too slowly. With Rayman 2, we hope that the player will very rarely have time to wonder what he's supposed to be doing. There are some very open passages with magnificent perspectives, then tighter pathways which are therefore more intuitive and better paced, before again leading to incredible panoramas.

Q64 — What has been the biggest difficulty in designing a camera for your game?

MA — I think we had the same difficulties as everyone else. At each moment in the game, we asked ourselves what the camera was to show the player: where to go, who to fight, where enemy shots are coming from, etc. Then it's up to us to place the camera correctly. It's just a question of work. One of the many challenges of the game was to make a very "director's cut" type of game. There are therefore very many different cameras which are used in a very studied manner in all the delicate passages of the game.

Q64 — Does the design of your camera dictate level design? For instance, tight claustrophobic levels are somewhat prohibited by the fact that cameras can't pan out as like in open spaces — unless walls are removed as in Mario 64's rope-bridges.

MA — This didn't really bother us. Of course the artists who created the levels graphically were careful not to construct scenes so tightly that the camera couldn't move about. But in reality this wasn't really a major constraint because the game designers or level directors, who are in charge of cameras and maps, can always switch to the standard game camera: either a fixed high-angle side view, or a low-angle shot. There is a great range of freedom and the work is almost comparable to directing a film, except that it's interactive too!

Q64 — What have you retained from 2D platform games and why?

MA — Some golden rules that remain valid for all games, therefore for 3D action games. These rules can be summed up in 4 words: SPEED (all the ingredients that force the player to keep constantly moving), TIMING (all the ingredients that require the player to move at the right time), PRECISION (in shooting, moving about, jumping) and RESOURCEFULNESS.

Q64 — And lastly, what would be your 3 Golden Rules of 3D game design?

MA — As many actions as possible for the hero. Clear objectives for the player. Pacing, pacing and more pacing. To sum it up, the player shouldn't have to find the action, the action must come to the player.
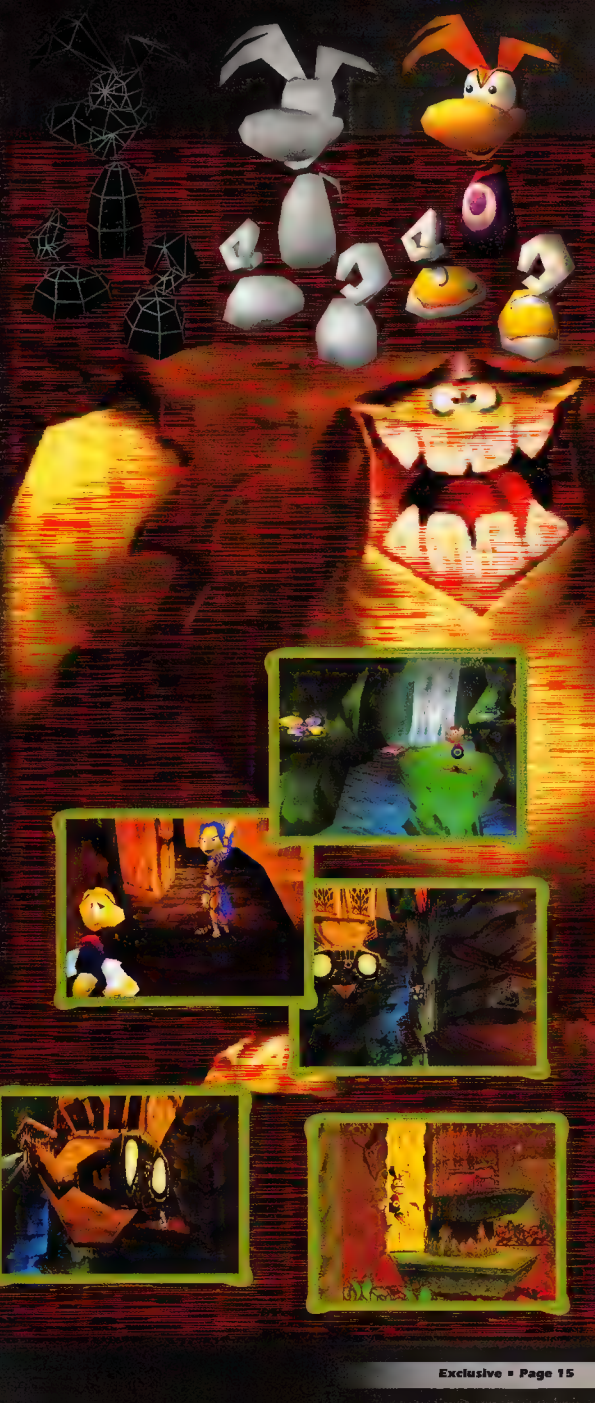
UBI SOFT'S
TONIC TROUBLE
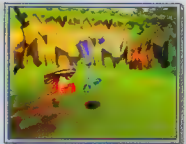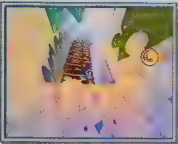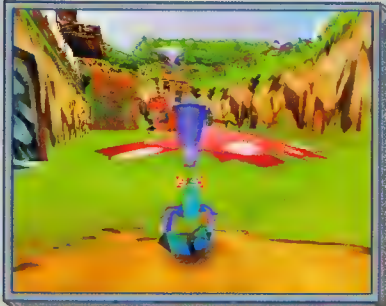
PUBLISHER
UBI SOFT
DEVELOPER
UBI SOFT
PLAYERS
1
AVAILABLE
DECEMBER
ESTIMATED PRICE
$54.99

Tonic Trouble is Ubi Soft's first N64 character-based, 3D action/platformer. The game chronicles the misadventures of Ed, an incompetent martian who can't seem to keep himself out of trouble. The whole mess started when the no-armed, no-legged purple dude dropped a strange liquid tonic on planet Earth. The result of this accident has mutated the local inhabitants into evil, raving lunatics. Ed's punishment is to fix his catastrophic blunder, which sets him off on an grand adventure with you at the controls. Featuring amazingly fluid cartoon-like animation, a free-roaming, go-anywhere surreal fantasy world, packed with brilliant colors, 3D sound effects and music, plus plenty of deep puzzle solving, Tonic Trouble might just be the next game to capture the hearts and imaginations of gamers everywhere. In the game, you will have to use your wits, as well as Ed's numerous abilities — which include jumping, running, grabbing, swinging, swimming, flying, crawling and shooting darts out of a blowpipe — in order to stay one step ahead of trouble and get things back to normal. Expect a long and in-depth quest, similar in style to Mario and Banjo and Kazooie, with lush graphics, refreshing character design (developed by Michel Ancel, creator of Rayman) and hours of gameplay.

There Are Some
Nasty Bugs
Going Around

www.buckbumble.com

Ubi Soft

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

NINTENDO⁶⁴

ARGONAUT
SOFTWARE LTD
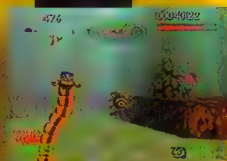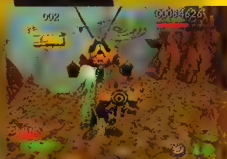
BIG BANG SOFTWARE'S

LODE RUNNER 64
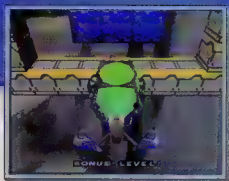
PUBLISHER
BIG BANG
DEVELOPER
BIG BANG
PLAYERS
1
AVAILABLE
JANUARY
ESTIMATED PRICE
$54.99
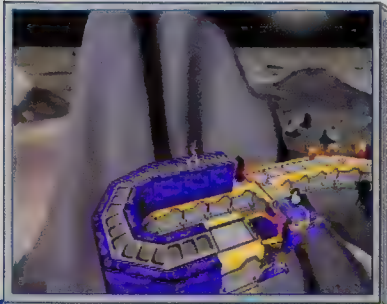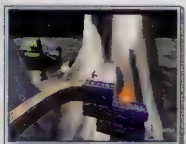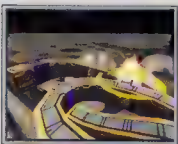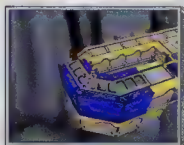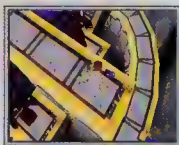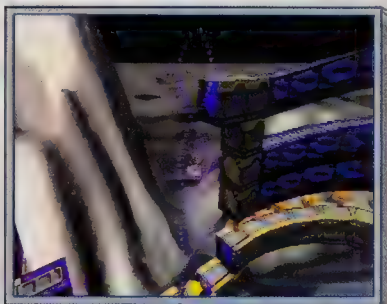
Most of you are probably too young to remember anything that happened in the early nineties, let alone the early eighties, back when the original Lode Runner was released for the Apple II. Lode Runner was an instant "classic", and a name that was as common to gamers as Pac Man, Donkey Kong, and Frogger. Well, fast forward many years and here comes Lode Runner 64, from developer Big Bang Software. The story around Lode Runner is that, after leaving Earth, Lode Runner became trapped on another planet, and has to make his way from world to world, gathering navigational information along the way. Lode Runner is a puzzle game at heart, but combines plenty of action and strategy to keep things moving at a blistering pace. There are five worlds to get through, containing over 100 levels (plus additional bonus levels). From what we've been able to play, it can safely be said that Lode Runner 64 will be an addicting game, and one that has classic game play that both younger and more experienced gamers will appreciate.

KONAMI'S

CASTLEVANIA 64

PUBLISHER
KONAMI
DEVELOPER
KONAMI
PLAYERS
1
AVAILABLE
JANUARY
ESTIMATED PRICE
$59.99

Konami's Castlevania 64 is shaping up very nicely. While the screen shots displayed here are from an early version of the game, it's evident that this is going to be one awesome 3D adventure. Retaining classic Castlevania action, yet brought into a 3D world, C64 will feature a new storyline and cast of characters. Some of the levels we've seen so far include a zombie-filled graveyard, an open courtyard, the castle interior and dark catacombs. The graphics shown were exceptional and diverse — really standing out when you consider the game is on a cartridge. In addition, Castlevania 64 features amazing, CD-quality audio and should not disappoint the die-hard Castlevania fans. Originally set to have a total of four selectable characters, the developers at Konami Japan have scaled it down to two, Schneider Belmont — ancestor of the famous family of vampire hunters and Carrie Eastfield — a 12 year-old girl with magical abilities, in an effort to conserve the precious RAM for more gameplay and audio elements. Some gameplay features worth mentioning are the passing of time (from nightfall to daybreak) and the ability to shove vampires into the light to defeat them. Castlevania is scheduled to ship before the holidays, but could slip into the first quarter of next year.

ACTIVISION'S

NIGHTMARE CREATURES
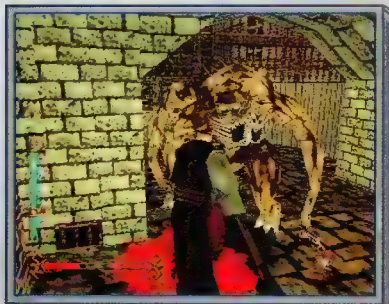
PUBLISHER
ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER
KALISTO
PLAYERS
1
AVAILABLE
MARCH
ESTIMATED PRICE
$54.99

Another title that originally debuted on the PlayStation, Nightmare Creatures is currently in the process of being rewritten for the 64-bit powerhouse. Using an enhanced game engine, this action/adventure takes place in the dark, gothic world of fog-shrouded, 19th century London. Using combat moves, as well as a variety of weapons and magic spells, players must eradicate a relentless horde of evil, deformed monsters created by an crazed mad-man, as they embark on a quest to uncover the dark secrets of his underground cult. Com-bining the combat elements of 3D fighting games with fully explor-able environments, Night-mare Creatures takes the traditional Final Fight-style gameplay to a whole new level. Gamers will have the choice to play as Ignatuis, a noble monk, or Nadia, a sword-wielding amazon — each with their own signature set of fighting moves (28 in all, including com-bos and finishing moves), as well as weapons that are upgraded as you progress through each level. In addition, the two will find a variety of hidden useful items, such as fire bombs, mines, and freeze, berzerker and confusion spells.

VIGILANTE 8

PUBLISHER
ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER
LUXOFLUX
PLAYERS
1-4
AVAILABLE
MARCH
ESTIMATED PRICE
$54.99
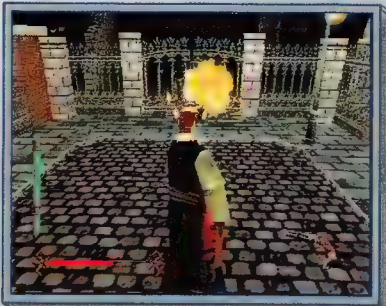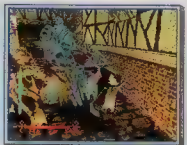
Vehicular Combat games have done extremely well for the PlayStation. The Twisted Metal series is already on its third sequel and, in addition, there are two other titles (GT Interactive's Rogue Trip and Activision's Vigilante 8) burning up the PS sales charts. So, why shouldn't the Nintendo 64 get some of that car-crunching combat? Activision answers this question with their N64 version of Vigilante 8, a hi-octane, driving-combat game in which players take control of a variety of fully-loaded vehicles and battle through an alternative '70's universe. Like the PlayStation version, V8 comes packed with a variety of features that really make this a stand-out title. Expect to see an amazing proprietary 3D landscape engine, delivering super-smooth gameplay in a variety of off-road battle arenas, as well as a bevy of special graphic effects, such as lens flares, real-time reflection mapping, car deformation, 3D explosions and fogging (yes, they do it on purpose in this game). If you are familiar with this title, then you'll want to know that the N64 version has new multi-player options — three and four player modes, two-player co-op quests, plus brawl, smear and survival modes — as well as a new quest mode for the Alien, a previously hidden character.
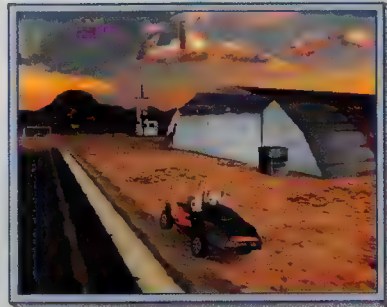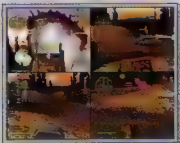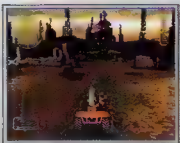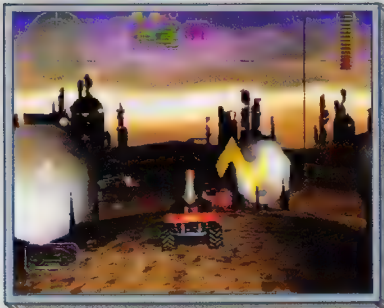
TITUS'

ROADSTERS 98
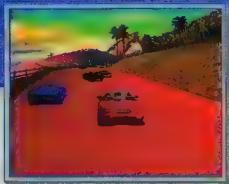
PUBLISHER
TITUS
DEVELOPER
GENETIC FANTASIA
PLAYERS
1 - 4
AVAILABLE
FEBRUARY
ESTIMATED PRICE
$59.99

Titus is hard at work on their second racing title for the Nintendo 64 (their first, Automobili Lamborghini, was visually stunning), called Roadsters '98. The new racing game features all convertibles — no hardtops to be found! There will be twenty different roadsters to choose from (plus some hidden bonus cars, of course) and eight styles of race tracks. There are snow filled mountain courses, sun drenched island coastline tracks, some wide-open country lanes, and a couple of congested city street layouts, as well. Some of the special f/x include skid marks, puffs of smoke from the exhausts, and drifts of snow flakes and sheets of rain. You'll also be required to make pitstops to repair your damaged vehicle and, to top things off, Roadsters '98 features a cool new instant replay system. We had a quick "test drive" of Roadsters '98 and the game does look fantastic but, better still, the control issues that hurt Automobili have been corrected and the cars all handle pretty nicely. We look forward to bringing you a complete review of Roadsters '98 in the Spring '99 issue of Q64.
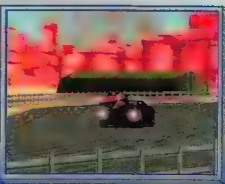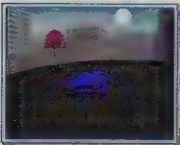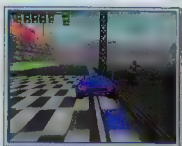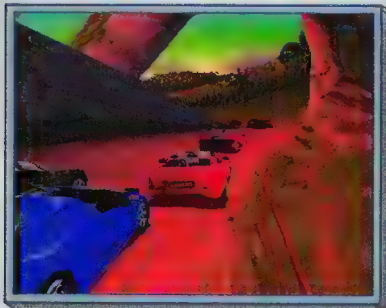
SURVIVOR: DAY ONE

PUBLISHER
KONAMI
DEVELOPER
KONAMI
PLAYERS
1
AVAILABLE
DECEMBER
ESTIMATED PRICE
$59.99

Konami has put out almost a dozen games for the N64 so far, ranging from sports titles to action/adventure and semi-RPG titles. Well, now you can add another genre to their list of games, as Survivor: Day One should break new ground in the Sci-Fi department. The story around Survivor takes place on a monstrous spacecraft, containing four different genetically enhanced biospheres. These biospheres contain living conditions, such as, snow filled mountains, deep river rain forests, cool weather agriculture lands, and a desert dry enough to parch your throat (although we still haven't figured out who would want to recreate a desert!). All together, there should be more than forty levels of action and suspense, tons of different bad guys and nasty aliens, and much more by the time the game is completed. The game is scheduled to ship in December, but may not make it until the first of the year — either way, look for a complete review in the Spring issue of Q64.
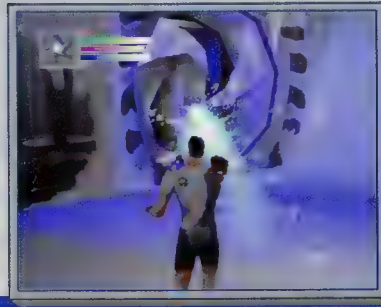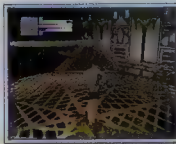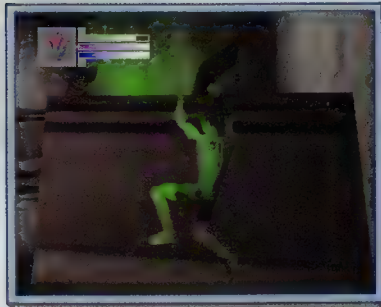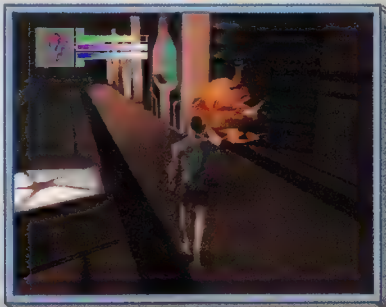
EA'S
FIFA 99

PUBLISHER
EA
DEVELOPER
EA SPORTS
PLAYERS
1 - 4
AVAILABLE
DECEMBER
ESTIMATED PRICE
$64.99

Midway and EA Sports WERE tied for the most variations of the same game, with three each of the Gretzky Hockey series and FIFA Soccer series. Well, EA Sports has "one upped" Midway with the upcoming release of their FOURTH soccer title in less than two years! Wow! In case you are wondering what could possibly be in FIFA 99 that wasn't in World Cup (title #3), here's what you get — club team soccer plus smarter AI, 19 new stadiums, quick player responses, varying height players, and over 240 European teams. The emphasis on FIFA 99 is certainly with the European clubs and, if that doesn't sound interesting to you, then you're either not a European (for whom this product is most definitely intended) or you're just not a big follower of the worldwide game. Despite this non-MLS focus (where's the Clash, for cryin' out loud?), the cartridge does have the usual array of options and gameplay choices. Check it out if you want, but don't tell us you were not fore-warned!

BATTLE TANX

PUBLISHER
3DO

DEVELOPER
3DO

PLAYERS
1-4

AVAILABLE
DECEMBER

ESTIMATED PRICE
$54.99

You play the role of a BattleLord who must protect his QueenLord from evil Tribesmen. The environments are the remains of real-life cities such as New York, Chicago, Las Vegas, and San Francisco. Each city has representative landmarks, and players can destroy all the buildings, vehicles, street lights, and any other objects that get in the way. There are numerous power ups, including guided missiles, nuclear bombs, and flame throwers, and a couple of different play perspectives. You can then switch to the rail gun, the Goliath, which, basically, is a large gun that rolls along tracks that surround your home fortress (where the QueenLord lives). You can switch back to the rail gun whenever you need to, and then quickly get back in your tank and continue your progress through the city, in search other QueenLord's so you can grow your tribe to become the biggest and baddest. We've played a ton of this game already, and can say that it's pretty darn amazing. A fantastic four player game, and an in-depth single player game to boot! Be sure to check this title out over the holidays!

TITUS'
SUPERMAN

PUBLISHER
TITUS
DEVELOPER
TITUS
PLAYERS
1-4
AVAILABLE
DECEMBER
ESTIMATED PRICE
$64.99

Superman almost made it into this issue of Q64 as a REVIEW, rather than a preview but, as bad luck would have it, a finished copy couldn't get here in time. So, what we have instead are the latest screen shots from the French developer, Titus, on what should be a blockbuster hit this holiday season. Although there have been many versions of Superman for many different home consoles and computers over the years, this Superman is the first to be based on the animated WB network cartoon series. In case you haven't seen it, the screen shots shown here look an awful lot like the sights from the TV show! Superman features 16 mission based levels, with immersive 3D environments that you can interact with (the Big S can pick up cars and trains, and smack around street lamps, etc.). The Man of Steel comes packed with all of his super powers, including X-Ray Vision, Flight, Super Strength, Super Breath, Heat Vision, and SuperSpeed. Superman will need all of these powers in order to stop Brainiac, Parasite, Metallo and, of course, Lex Luther. And let's not forget Lois Lane — Superman has got to rescue her, too!
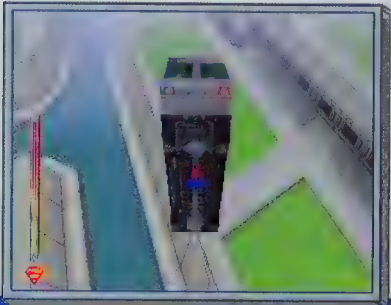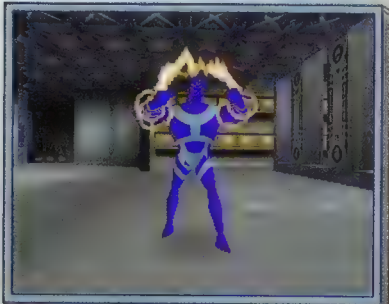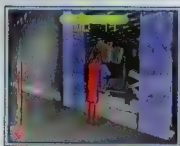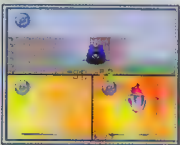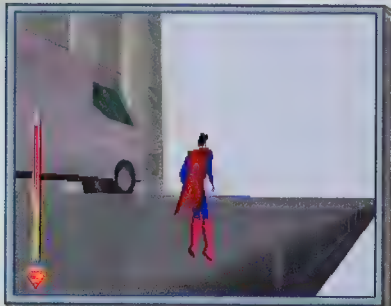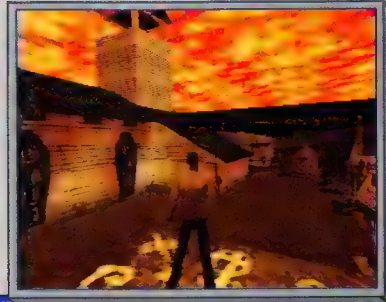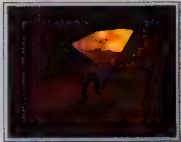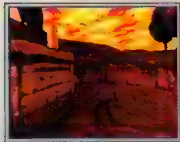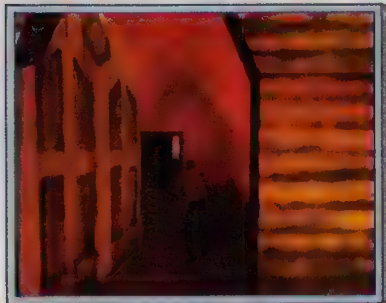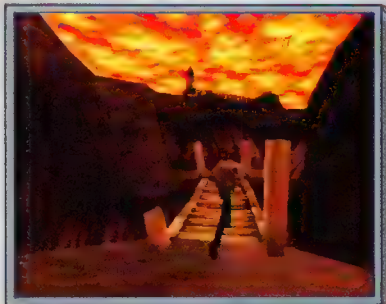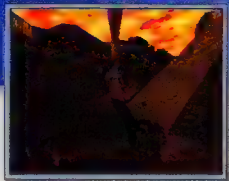
SHADOWMAN

PUBLISHER	ACCLAIM
DEVELOPER	IGUANA
PLAYERS	1
AVAILABLE	JANUARY
ESTIMATED PRICE	$54.99

Acclaim is getting closer to releasing their highly anticipated 3D action-thriller, Shadowman. This game should set the standard for adult-themed games on any system, let alone the youthful Nintendo 64! The story for Shadowman goes something like this: Set against the mysterious back-drop of Voodoo mythology, Shadowman puts players in the role of Mike LeRoi, English Literature grad-uate now turned hired assassin, oper-ating within the dark and seedy underworld of New Orleans, who has the ability to, at will, cross over into Deadside, the world of the dead, where he becomes the Shadowman — an immortal voodoo-warrior with astonishing powers.

The game begins with a dream — a prophetic nightmare vision of Armageddon, as seen by Mama Nettie, the voodoo sorceress who cre-ated the Shadowman by forcibly implanting the powerful Shadowmask in Mike LeRoi's chest. In her dream, Nettie foresees the coming of the Apocalypse — the day that the dead literally rise up and walk the earth. Her only weapon against the com-ing storm is the Shadowman, who she charges with the task of stepping across the veil into Deadside and to venture into the place where all killers are consigned when they die — the Asylum.
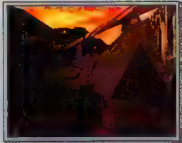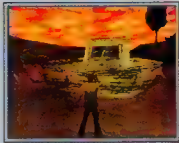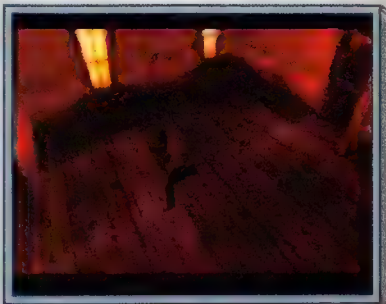
JUDGEMENT 64

ACCLAIM'S

QUARTERBACK CLUB 99
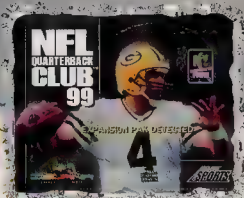
THE SWEET TASTE OF VICTORY
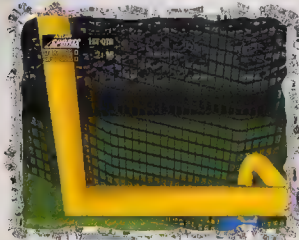
As every N64 football fan knows, Acclaim's "NFL Quarterback Club 98" won last year's gridiron battle, against EA Sports' "Madden NFL Football 98" — both critically, and in terms of retail sales. Of course, Madden didn't have an NFL license last year and, because of the strong graphic look of Quarterback Club 98, Acclaim's game was able to get away with a few gameplay problems. Well, as they say, it's a new season and the two warriors are at it again. Madden scored a "7" in our last issue, does QB Club 99 have what it takes to get our Editor's Seal of Approval? Let's take a look.

GAMEPLAY

QB Club 99 has all of the moves, with quality animation to match (see "Graphics" below). As was the case

last year, Acclaim and Iguana have given us all of the options we could ask for, and then some. Players have the ability to, among many other things, customize the camera to their liking, rotate, zoom and, in general, go crazy with an instant replay system that features frame-by-frame animation that has to be seen to be believed, an analog passing mode (much like Madden's) that allows players to control the pass via the analog stick, play books that have been tailored to specific teams, offensive and defensive practice modes, a full-fledged fantasy draft, the ability to create players, all of the past Super Bowl teams (sorry, no player names) and a bunch of programmer-created teams.

The game plays, courtesy of the beautiful 640 x 480 graphics and all those move animations, a little on the slow side, but
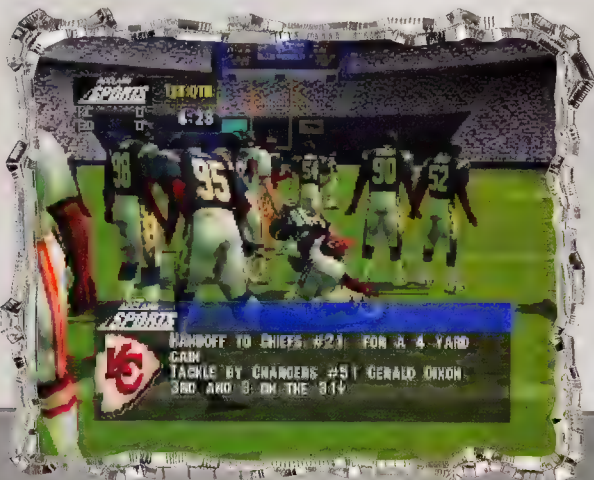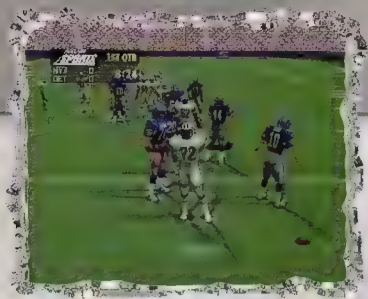
not to the point of distraction. Of course, you might want to run out and purchase that new RAM expansion Pak that Nintendo has been hyping, the "Power Pak." Its extra memory takes care of storing all of those wonderful player animations and the use of the Pak makes a noticeable difference in the speed of the game.

The computer is not the smartest opponent that we've ever faced. If you want to, it is easy to move the ball down field at will. Just send your receivers deep, clear the linebackers and (as the QB take off! In my first season game on "Pro" level — 'Niners vs. Jets, Young ran for 254 yards on 15 carries.) Of course, we don't want to cheat, so we'll pretend that we don't know that. Like last year, the gameplay is solid, if

unspectacular. Because of the slow pace of play, the game feels "soft." By that, I mean that you don't really feel the impact of a big hit (rumble pack aside) and, as your season moves along, you will grow impatient with the wait as your offense breaks a huddle and heads up to the line of scrimmage and after the whistle blows. The game plays at almost the same rate as Acclaim's "All Star Baseball 99." Where this is no big deal for baseball, it does have an effect on football. Of

course, you may be too busy marveling over the graphics to realize how average the gameplay is. Again, purchasing the Pak will solve many of these problems. From a learning curve standpoint, the running game is pretty easy to get into but, to get your passing game humming, you're going to have to spend some time on the practice field. Once, you've got the hang of it, it's pretty easy to pick the open receiver and get the ball down field. On defense, you end up watching more than

JUDGEMENT 64

CAMERA VIEWS

GRAPHICS

How 'bout them thar pretty pictures, Cleetus? There is absolutely no question that Acclaim/Iguana have the N64 wired. Between the baseball game mentioned above and this football game, they have two of the best looking games on the system and certainly the best looking sports games of all time. If you really want to be amazed, take some time to play around with the game's instant replay feature. This is where you can get an idea on just how detailed the player animation is. Unfortunately, you don't really get the same sense of things in real-time gameplay, but it is guaranteed to amaze your friends and relations. Game speed suffers because of the outstanding quality of the player animation and stadium environments, but the gameplay is still competitive with Madden and these are the only two choices in town. If you have the Power Pak, then your speed worries are over.

DRAFT ROUND 13

SOUND

Given the well-documented speech and sound limitations inherent to the cartridge format, the play-by-play,

MANAGE ROSTERS

playing. Although you have what are now almost standard defensive moves in the ability to do swim moves, turbo boost, dive, etc., you spend most of your time trying to activate the closest tackler and, more often than not, there are too many players in one area of the field. This results in the activated player, when you press the button, many times NOT being the guy closest to the ball. You end up just sort of whacking buttons and hoping for the best.

courtesy of ESPN's Mike Patrick, is acceptable under the circumstances and the sound samples are high quality, if limited in quantity. The color commentary, by former SF 49er center Randy Cross, is an entirely different proposition. Repetitive, annoying and, many times, just plain wrong. Hey, Randy... "cliché time" — don't quit your day job.

CONCEPT

There isn't a whole lot left to be done with football on the N64, save changing how the game is played and controlled. Acclaim has just about every imaginable feature in this game, the graphics are beautiful and the entire package is very professional. Makes it hard to imagine what they'll do with "2000" — it won't need much more than some roster changes and quicker gameplay (we doubt that they are going to overhaul the way we play the game)

SHELF LIFE

Can't go wrong here... heck, we'll bet that many of you still haven't completed your seasons from last year. Of course, the multi-player angle is going to insure that, even if you don't play a season against the computer, the replay value

is strong.

CONCLUSION

NFL Quarterback Club '99 beats out Madden again this year. The presentation quality is second to none, the gameplay, if unspectacular, is solid and the features list and statistical database is impressive. They even have an animation for the net coming down after a field goal or extra point attempt. While there are still some gameplay and football AI issues, the passing and running games are fun, games against the computer are challenging and we could just watch that instant replay all day long. A great entertainment value and further proof that Acclaim/Iguana are the sports publisher/developer to beat on N64.

DAVE

THE 64 SCORE				
GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
7	9	7	8	9

OVERALL SCORE 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

JUDGEMENT 64

HASBRO'S

GLOVER

"HE'S A GLOVER, NOT A FIGHTER!"
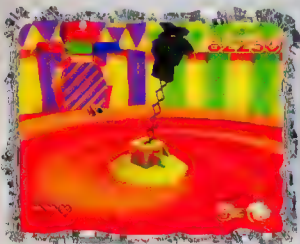
Glover, the first N64 effort from Hasbro, is a game that takes place in Michael Jackson's Neverland...oops...wrong gloved one! THIS game takes place in the Crystal Kingdom, where a good wizard accidentally mixed the wrong potions. The resulting explosion dislodged 7 turret crystals which were the life force of the kingdom. The accident also turned the wizard to stone and knocked his gloves off. One of the gloves landed in a caldron of pure evil (what was that doing lying around?) and the other one... well... the other one is you! Fortunately, you were able to cast a spell to transform the crystals into rubber balls before they could break. Unfortunately, they all bounced away into different parts of the kingdom. You've got to find them and return them to the castle, turning them back into crystals and restoring the life force. Meanwhile, your evil counterpart is trying to stop you.

GAMEPLAY

Glover is essentially a 3D exploration game, albeit with a twist. You control the hero, Glover, who looks like the Hamburger Helper guy, except for the fact that he is upside down and doesn't have a big red nose. With your fingers doing the walking, you traverse the kingdom in search of the rubber balls. You can jump, slam into the ground as a fist, cast spells, cartwheel, and crawl, with three camera perspectives to follow your movement.

The fun begins when you actually find one of the rubber balls. You must use Glover to push or roll the balls around the landscape. When you come across obstacles, you can bounce the ball, pick up the ball and throw it, or slap it forwards. When the ball falls into deep water it floats, and you can only move it by jumping on top of it and running in the opposite direction from the way you want to go. It sounds tricky, and it is, but fortunately

there is a training level for you to get the hang of all the controls. One more thing — with your magic power, you can transform the rubber ball back and forth into a bowling ball, a steel ball, or a crystal. Why would you want to do that? Well, each of these balls has various properties that the others lack — the bowling ball is heavy and able to break obstacles, the steel ball is magnetic, the rubber ball floats, etc. These properties come in handy depending on the obstacles you face.

Each world consists of three levels, a bonus stage, and an end stage where some sort of "boss" character awaits you. The worlds have themes such as Atlantis, Carnival, Pirate, and Pre-historic. No matter what the theme, the basic challenge is always the same — in each level you've got to maneuver the ball to an exit. Sometimes you'll
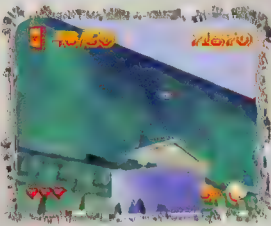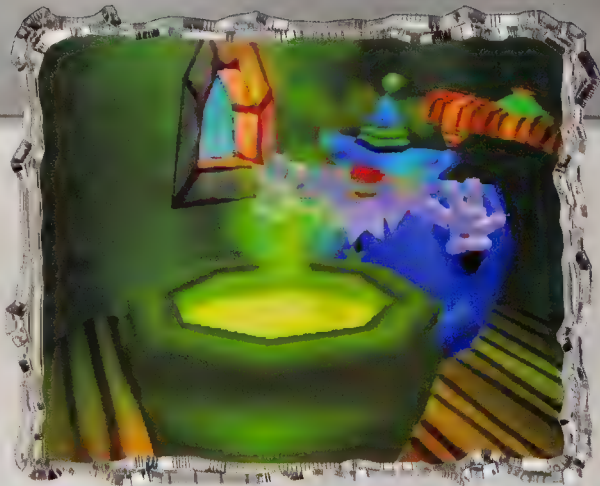
have to solve puzzles of the basic button-pushing variety, and other times you've just got to carefully make your way past obstacles. All levels are accessed through portals similar to Diddy Kong Racing and you can return to a level at any time. As with most 3D exploration games, there are items to collect — here they are called garibs, and they look like flags with stars on them. It is not necessary to find all the garibs to exit a level, but collecting all of them is the only way you'll gain access to the bonus round. The battles against bosses are fairly sedate — after all, you're

a glover, not a fighter! Defeating them requires either throwing the ball or using your fist slam, or both, but there is no way of figuring out which, except through trial and error. Glover borrows play mechanics from Marble Madness, a classic coin-op from the 1980's, except rather than moving the ball through a maze you've got to move through a 3D environment. Unfortunately, there is a steep learning curve involved and you may find yourself throwing the ball off a cliff when you actually meant to set it down. Not only are there obstacles and enemies in each

JUDGEMENT 64

GRAPHICS

The graphics are not spectacular, but they are good enough to portray the various areas of the kingdom. As usual, there is a bit of fog present. The animation of the main character is cute, especially the "hurry up" animation- Glover will wave to the camera or lay down and tap his (her?) fingers — but Glover lacks the charm of a Mario or Gex. Unlike those games, there are also few memorable enemy or level designs.

SOUND

Glover himself doesn't provide any wise-cracks, but he will shout the occasional "Shazam!" when transforming the ball between its different forms. The game is also chock full of humorous sound effects to accompany the bouncing, throwing, popping, dropping, sliding, splashing, and other action. As for theme music, it changes from world to world and from level to level within each area of the kingdom. There are circus tunes in the Carnival area, new age type music in Atlantis, accordion ditties in Pirates, etc. While I enjoyed some themes and hated others, it never got too repetitive, which is a definite plus.

CONCEPT

At its core, Glover is yet another 3D

level which you must avoid, but often the environment itself — narrow platforms and ledges or moving water, presents the biggest challenge. It is quite easy to lose your bearings and fall to your death, and sometimes the camera angles make things worse. You can always drop the ball while you search for the exit, but you may need it to open a switch later in the game. In addition, the uneven terrain may cause the ball to roll away in your absence. If you ever lose the ball, pressing a button will literally point Glover in the right direction.

exploration game, similar to Mario World 64, Banjo Kazooie, Gex, and too many others to mention. Almost all of these games have common elements — you have to run around collecting something (stars, notes, remote controls, garibs, whatever) while avoiding enemies and eventually encountering level bosses. What Glover adds to the genre is in the way that you move through a level. Rather than moving the main character through levels, you control a hand that manipulates a ball, and your moves differ depending on whether you are alone or holding the ball itself. The ability to change the form of the ball is also unique and adds more challenge to the game.

SHELF LIFE

This is a tough call. There are six areas in the kingdom with three levels, a bonus round, and a boss confrontation, for 30 challenges in all. Although it will take time to get all the garibs to open up the bonus round, you can power through most levels in an average of only 5 to 10 minutes — especially once you've seen them before. The Time Trial mode is an interesting option that adds somewhat to the replay value. It lets you go through any level you have already completed, in an attempt to beat the best time. Unfortunately, the overall difficulty of the game can be frustrating. After you've lost life after life, if

you can't get past a certain level you may be tempted to give up on the game altogether, in which case the replay value is nil.

CONCLUSION

Glover's unique play mechanic makes it stand out from typical 3D exploration games. Unfortunately, it also makes the game more difficult. It isn't that the enemies or the puzzles are too hard — the basic control for just moving the ball is tough to master. Add a camera that occasionally gets stuck behind walls so that you can't see yourself, checkpoints which aren't exactly where they need to be, and paths that swing or rotate and you won't exactly have a ball playing this game. It's uniqueness makes it a reasonably enjoyable experience, if you've got the patience to stick with it, but it is probably a game which is beyond the ability of younger kids and most casual gamers.

MARK

THE 64 SCORE				
GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
7	7	8	9	6

OVERALL SCORE 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10

UBI SOFT'S

BUCK BUMBLE

"BUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE"

From the developers of the ever popular "Croc" and, most importantly, "StarFox", comes Buck Bumble, a 3D action/arcade shooter for the N64. Playing the role of Buck Bumble, a cyborg bumblebee, you set forth to save Buck's world from the likes of the Evil Herd — a group of mutated insects intent on making slaves out of anyone they can — using them as food for their diabolical mutants. Buck, a prototype Bumble Bee, has been cybornetically augmented to dole out tons of reciprocal punishment with his arsenal of advanced military equipment. Buck accomplishes this via a third person viewpoint, through three zones encompassing numerous levels of action. Ultimately, if successful, Buck must do battle against the Queen of The Evil Herd herself!

GAMEPLAY

In England, a spillage of toxic waste has genetically mutated the insect world for the worse. The Evil Herd, as they are known, are now poised to assume total domination over the land of the bugs; but their diabolical plans don't stop there. Looking to move beyond just oppressing the insect kingdom, The Evil Herd sets forth to form the ultimate coalition. Simply put, they plan to bug everyone to death if they are not stopped (sorry for that one). One would think that the people of England would simply grab a can of Raid, and mist-ify these bugs once and for all? Well, it is not that easy. See, it would be rather difficult for a bloke to spot every tiny mutant insect, so the services of Buck Bumble are ordered. Featuring 20 levels of play, in 6 different environments including Wasteland, the Garden and the Graveyard, Buck will be rather busy as he attempts to thwart the efforts of The Evil Herd. Buck is a very talented little Bee. Weighing in at just over .08 ounces, he packs a major wallop! Basically, his assignment is to run
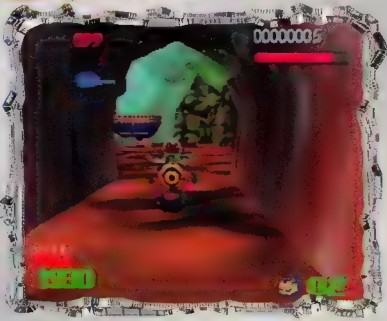
Led by the Evil Herd Queen, they are bent on the destruction of all in their path to superiority in the insect world.
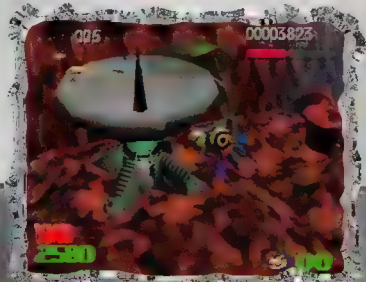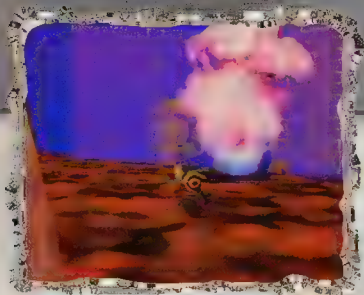
numerous sorties into Herd territory, using upwards of 11 available weapons to ultimately achieve victory. To do so effectively, he has been outfitted with body armor, and can switch to upgraded weapons packages like plasma pistols, homing missiles and lightning bolts "on-the-fly" (I am killing myself with this stuff). These upgrades are obtained by capturing the unused armaments of defeated foes. His enemies include; Dragon Flies that fire pulse-lasers, Ants that spit acid, Giz Beetles armed with acid-cannons, the deadly swarming Wasp MK1 Units, Craneflies - ReCon units, Killa Pillars and Transpotters — transport units. While the Transpotters have no viable offensive weaponry, once blown-up they spew forth a nasty green substance that can cause Buck damage.

Buck flies deftly around the motley horde of critters, making use of modern avionics techniques like
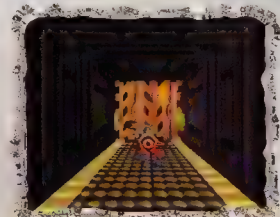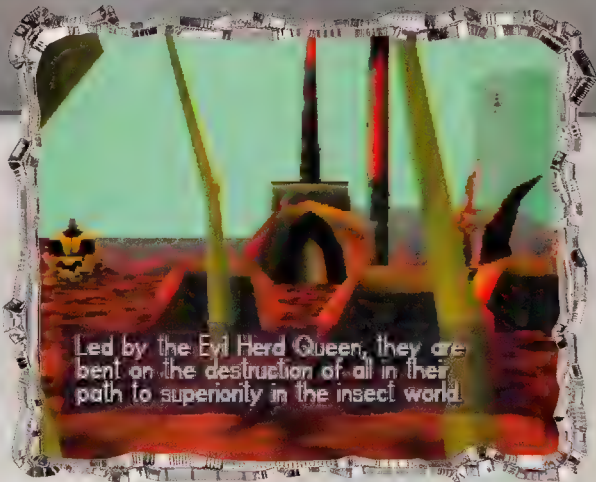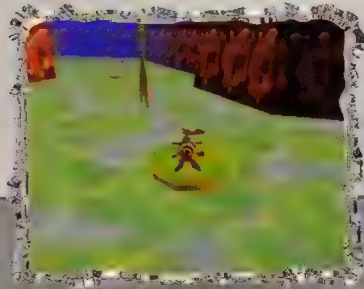
the famed Immelman turn, the figure eight and a nifty hovering technique that allows for jinking and precision long range targeting. Clipping along at about 8 knots, Buck is no speed demon by any means, so he must rely upon savvy flying and sheer cunning to have an advantage against the well equipped Herdsmen and women. This all takes place in a free-roaming environment, albeit with altitude and perimeter boundaries. He can also walk along the ground; which is very effective when targeting Transpotters. To sustain Buck's life, he must ferret out
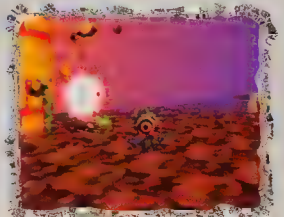
the nectar from special flowers that are found throughout the stages. There are keys to find, portals to unlock, and numerous bugs to splat before reaching the Queen of The Evil Herd. Enemies will go for the easy flanking maneuvers, as well as more aggressive flight patterns, in trying to ground Buck for good.

Control in this game is very nice, as it takes only a short while to become accustomed to the feel and mechanics of the game. The camera work is good, but does suffer from some limitations when Buck is walking around on the ground — especially

learned during the original StarFox development, Buck Bumble won't stumble.

GRAPHICS

Getting into the visuals of the game, Mr. Bumble's title sports some very snazzy graphics. A nice color palette is further complimented by smooth, detailed textures. The classic Nintendo fog is present, although I am sure the fact that the game is set in England will be the excuse for its presence in this title. Regardless, the draw-in is effectively masked by the murky soup. The bugs are all rather convincingly conceived, and the environments are lush and vibrant with color and detail. At all times, there is some nice eye candy on-screen to be viewed.

SOUND

Here is where Buck Bumble is a training device for other developers. Argonaut have extracted some serious response from the Nintendo sound board this time around. Everything from the slick opening Reggae-Rap music, to the in-game library of inspiring selections, comes across full and vibrant. Nice bass, and well mixed midi soundtracks pour forth effortlessly from your television or stereo system's speakers. Programming audio doesn't get much better than this. The sound effects were aptly chosen, and flawlessly implemented, adding a sense

when he is descending a sloped parcel of land. During these moments it is difficult to see upward well. The good thing is that, with most of this game being played from the air, these shortcomings are only encountered occasionally throughout the game. Navigating Buck is rather intuitive and, before long, you will have him heading in the right direction (at all times) like a true fighter pilot. Snaking through foliage or pinpointing power sources, Buck has his wings full at a all times with intense mission-based action. Making use of some tricks, obviously

of cinematic posh to the game.

CONCEPT

The N64 has been lacking in the third person shooter category for some time now. With this title, however, the N64 has something it can be proud of. The premise of assuming the role of a tiny insect charged with saving a universe has not often been done, let alone so well. Embodying mechanics reminiscent of StarFox, along with fundamental shooter characteristics that sometimes feel like the PlayStation's ever popular WarHawk, Buck Bumble is a great game, in terms of scope and execution.

SHELF LIFE

Unless someone comes from under a rug, with a bag of fleas and a new take on bug-based stardom, Buck Bumble has no peer on its home system. The game does get progressively more difficult, and there are several levels, but it is not something that will take forever to play and master. This is especially true since the game is so darn much fun in the first place. Notwithstanding bingeing on the game for a few days, there is replay value added via a hidden level (the 23rd) and a scoring system that measures your efficiency while you progress through the game.
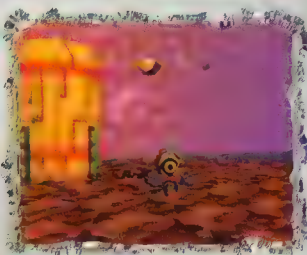
CONCLUSION

When I got hold of this game for review, I was jaundiced toward it (at first) because of its overly cutesy look; something a number of Nintendo games have suffered from. In fact, I was almost dreading having to labor through (what I perceived would be) inane gameplay at the hands of a childish premise. Well, I come to you with my proverbial tail between my legs because, at this point, I don't even want to send the ROM back to the company. I love this game! Really... I do! It is terrific fun, great therapy (after a long day at school or work) and it really grabs you from the onset. There aren't many games of this level of quality on the market today, and Argonaut should be proud to have this one as their own. Anyone, adult or child, can find enjoyment in Buck Bumble; which, I might add, is a good thing, since many copies will be flying off store shelves this holiday season. **FABIAN**

| THE 64 SCORE | | | | |
GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
9	8	9	8	7

OVERALL SCORE 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

JUDGEMENT 64

TWISTED EDGE SNOWBOARDING

"ITS TIME TO TWIST AGIAN, LIKE WE DID LAST WINTER"

Developed by Boss Games Studios, Twisted Edge has been in development for over a year now. The focus, apparently, was to best the well-received 1080 Snowboarding, developed by Nintendo several months ago. This had to prove a challenge, as 1080 is visually appealing, in addition to being very fun to play; albeit after overcoming a rather steep learning curve. So, have the game's developers achieved this lofty task? Lets break it down by the numbers and see what shakes out.

GAMEPLAY

The game starts off with four characters to choose from, with up to eight coming available once the latter difficulty levels are beaten in the Competition Mode. The courses are varied in that they have extendible paths, and areas that can be closed-off or opened-up to reveal more sections of the course. This is basically the Ridge Racer approach to track design,
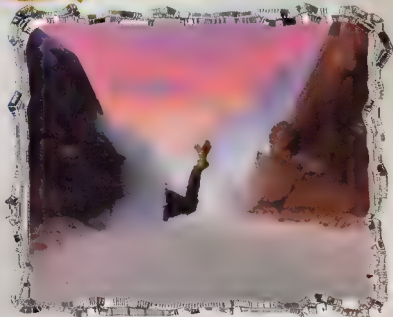
but here at least, in Twisted Edge, it seems to have been used much more effectively. There are steep slopes, drops, snow-bank ramps, ice patches and trails, powdered areas that can slow you down and packed snow throughout. There are even sections that have been worn down to the rock, due to snow drifts, and you must avoid these areas to prevent yourself from being slowed too much. Obstacles are plentiful, but the width of the tracks counter-balances their presence enough to keep the obstacles from being frustrating.

Firing up this game, the first thing that one will notice is the sheer size of the courses. These courses are huge, allowing for a significant amount of lateral movement due to their extreme width. This has a positive affect on the gameplay, because there is a larger margin for error and miscalculations when determining the proper racing lines to take. The drift of your board across various surfaces is very
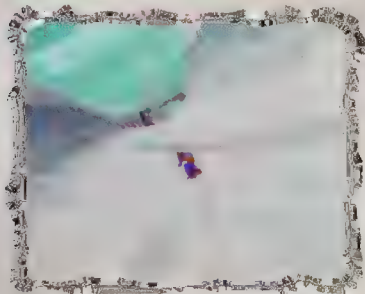
discernible also. Depending upon your speed, weight, board-type and the surface you are racing upon, the board will skew at varying degrees. Therefore, it does take some time getting familiar with your rider, their attributes and their skill levels. More importantly, the actual boards exhibit different traits as well, and must be properly combined with the boarder, and the players skill level, to achieve effective results. After a brief time with the game, you will find that it is loads of fun, because it is not plagued by tedious execution and gameplay issues. It took only a half-dozen or so jaunts through the Novice Level courses to get the feel and hang of this game. Let's face it: How difficult should a game of this type be? Twisted Edge is definitely not light on stunts either. There are tail-grabs, misty-flips, triple-back flips, 180s, 360s, 1080s and so on, as well as, front-

flips, cross-bows, tweaks, melan-cholys, egg-flips, double 720 nose-grabs and many many more. In fact, this game has up to 150 different trick variations to choose from and execute. This is where the Stunt Mode can be your best choice for a great time. The game rewards flare with speed. Every time you successfully complete a move, you are given a speed boost. This is very helpful when approaching jumps, giving you maximum air time, and therefore more time to complete and string tricks together. Flying across slick snow at intense speeds, over natural
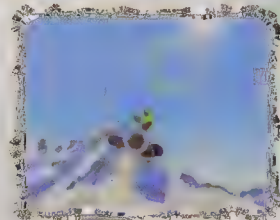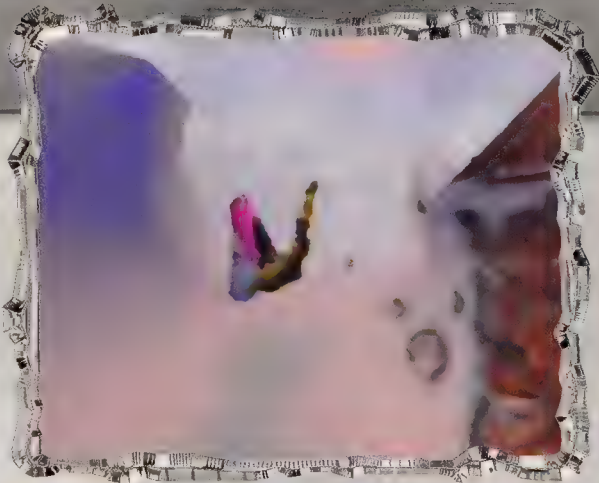
terrain and half-pipes crafted by Mother Nature herself, it's no wonder that someone decided to take the skateboarding premise a step further. You can suck wind in an ice cave, while slipping through a city-scape and while leaping off 100 foot drops. When in Competition and Head-To-Head (split-screen) modes, riders can slam into one another, throwing each other off course, significantly slowing things down. Also, if one is predisposed to slamming into cliff-sides and snow-banks, you will find yourself spending much time moving at a snail's pace. In fact, if you get
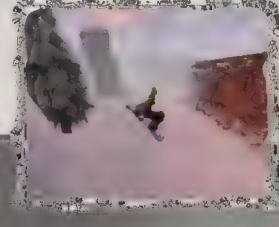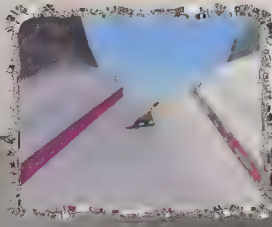
JUDGEMENT 64
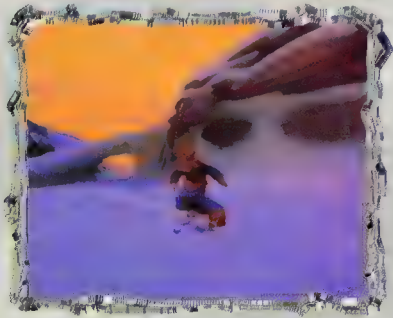
stopped at the wrong time, you can actually get caught sliding backwards down a steep rise, due to lack of momentum. There are three view perspectives in the game — all of them are third person. Nonetheless, the views available are all playable and provide the user with a good view of the courses at all times. The replay camera function will equally re-cap all your triumphs and failures. Sporting a number of different angles, the replay camera captures every nuance of your efforts. The only downside to this is that the replay function is not user controlled. It is

fully automatic, and engages after each race or session.

GRAPHICS

As far as graphics are concerned, the success of this type of games is significantly contingent upon view distance and scrolling, in addition to other such graphic benchmarks. Twisted Edge has a softer color palette than that found in Nintendo's 1080 game, but the resulting effects and environments are equally pleasing. The softness of the snow is aptly portrayed, and the serenity of the environments is preserved. Tracks are left in the snow, and vary in width according to the pitch and angle of the board. Snazzy lens flares are sprinkled throughout the levels, and really show their convincing renditions in the replay mode. The snow, ice and rock textures are all convincing. The only complaint comes in the form of the less than vibrant looking clothing textures used to hide your player's shivering nakedness. The clothes seem dull, as do the character designs themselves. However, the backgrounds are lush and lend well to the overall appearance of the game. The frame-rate is snappy as all get out, and the draw-in is so deep in the distance that it is not noticeable.
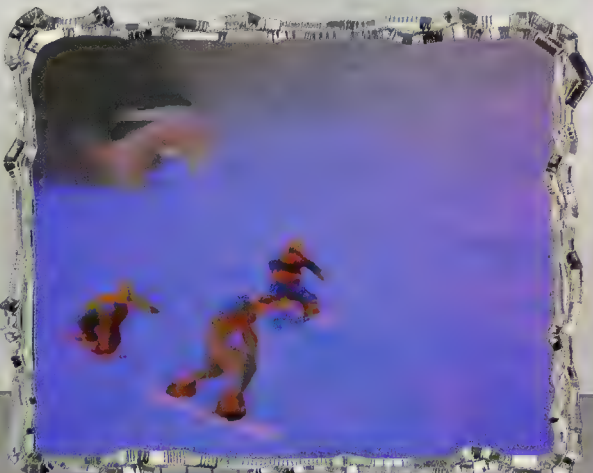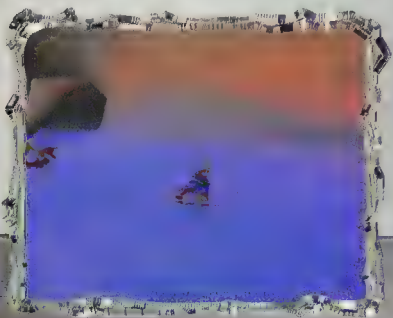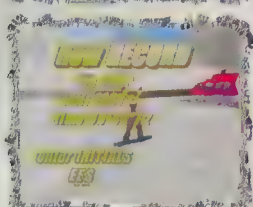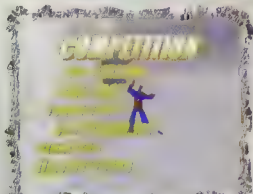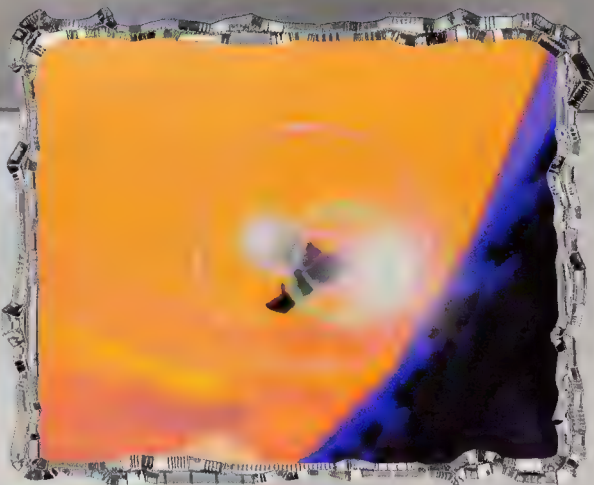
SOUND

Twisted Edge makes use of some nice sound effects, but they are too frequently "subtle" to the point of being dull. In-flight sounds were nicely manufactured or sampled, but they are not aggressively implemented enough. Collision sounds, as well as the sounds of the board on ice, snow and raw surfaces are all very good. The music is average, but frequently annoying. The gnarly voice-overs are actually of good quality, but as with most cart based games, limited in repertoire.

CONCEPT

There is nothing new and exciting here except for the fact that Twisted Edge is more Arcade fare than its 1080 Snowboarding counterpart. This bodes will for the title as many gamers, not so inclined to such sports, will find plenty of enjoyment when playing this game. Twisted Edge is fun despite being derivative in today's over-crowded Snowboarding genre. What is here, however, is very good, and lots of fun — no doubt.

SHELF LIFE

A game like Twisted Edge's replay value is dependent upon several factors. The most important of which are player preference, and variety of results. As mentioned, this game houses up to 150 different tricks and moves. That is a whole lot of stuff to explore and achieve, and gives the game some serious points in the replay value category. Regardless, it is Snowboarding, and those not totally enthralled by the sport may find that the game stales easily; whereas fans of 1080 will no doubt find much of the good in this title.
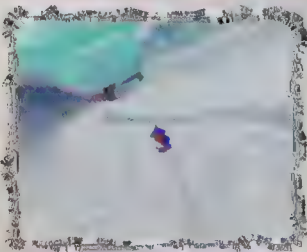
CONCLUSION

If you have mastered 1080 Snow boarding, then Twisted Edge will be easy by comparison. It is more arcade-like, and therefore, to many people, more fun. Nice graphics, great gameplay and a slick attitude make this game a sure-shot hit for almost any gamer. As with this review, many comparisons will be drawn to the Nintendo title of the same genre, but when all is said and done, Twisted Edge is a serious presence and a title that should be tried for fit. This proves to be a nice arcade variation and a serious effort.

FABIAN
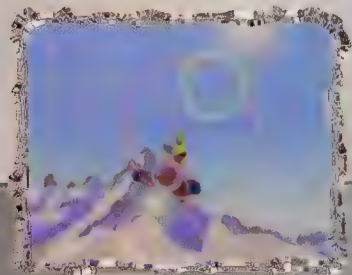
THE 64 SCORE				
GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
8	8	7	6	7

OVERALL SCORE: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10

NBA
JAM
99

A GOOD ROOKIE CAMPAIGN
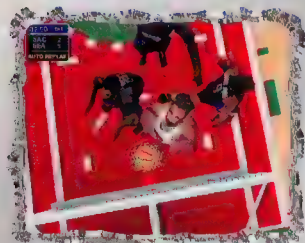
Acclaim, with the release of NBA Jam 99, now is the first developer for the Nintendo 64 to have released titles for every major sport. NBA Jam 99 joins Acclaim's other top selling sports titles; NFL QB Club 99, NHL Breakaway 99 and All Star Baseball 99. Developed by Salt Lake City based Iguana (the main house for Iguana is in Austin, Texas), the new hoops title comes packed with two styles of gameplay; the 5-on-5 simulation mode and, as heritage to its name, a Jam mode (which is also 5-on-5).

GAMEPLAY

Much like Acclaim's first attempt at QB Club for the N64, Jam 99 seems to face some of the same gameplay issues that made it difficult to play. Maybe "difficult to play" is a bit strong; "not as good as should" might be a better phrase. The players react haphazardly to your commands — sometimes they do what you ask of them, and sometimes they don't. One of the areas I always look for in a hoops game is how well you can rebound a missed shot. You want to be able to take a jumper from the outside, then hit the button that switches to the guy under the hoop (the closest to the ball button) and try to snag the 'board for an easy out back, or better yet, monster tip-jam. In Jam 99, when you are successful at this, it makes for some incredible non-stop action (and amazing instant replays). Players swoop through the air and make some acrobatic one-handed put-backs, and other times they'll grab the ball with two hands and just crush it right through the hoop. At this point, everybody is going "ooh" and "ahh" and the announcers are also enjoying the moment ("I've never seen anything like that before!"). Unfortunately, this doesn't happen often enough, and for reasons you never know. You hit the buttons just like you always do, but

Skills Mode

Play Book
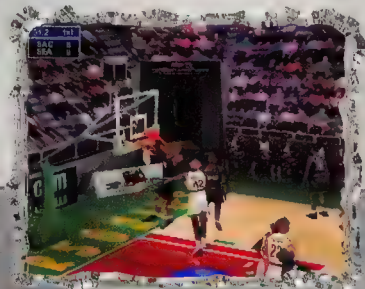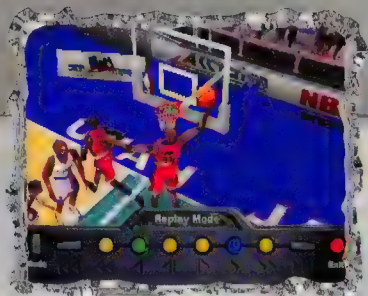
there isn't the consistency that is required to make you feel like you're in control of the gameplay. Another big area of concern for me is in the blocked shot department. Here, again, you get mixed results with NBA Jam 99. For the most part, blocking shots is pretty rewarding, but the fact of the matter is, the animations are a bit stiff, and don't respond to your quick button tapping. Too often for my tastes, there will be a hesitation between the time you hit the button, and the time the guy jumps to block the shot. What will result in the late jump, though, is even more frustrating than if the player simply didn't react; that is, he'll jump up and grab the ball out of the air and be called for goal tending! I must get called for 6-10 of these infractions per game — not good.

Ok, I've got my two biggest pet-peeves out of the
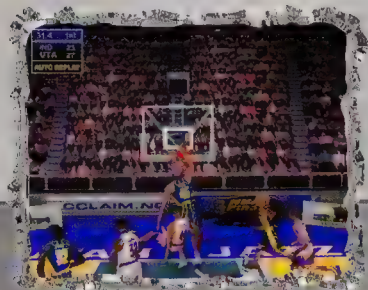
way early — now I can tell you about the basic play mechanics. First, the interface for Jam 99 is much easier to use than is that of EA's Live 99. First, the turbo button is the 'Z' button (instead of the left-C for Live), and this makes driving to the hoop easier for those of us with fat fingers. Next, throwing an alley-oop is as simple as a quick double tap of the left-C button, as opposed to Live 99 where you'll need to press the Left shoulder pad and a C button at the same time (try doing that when you use the analog stick — no way!). Also, calling for a pick in Jam 99

seems to be much more responsive than in Live (they're both just a tap of a yellow button away). Also, setting up and calling a play in both games is simply done, although you'll need to be a bit more on guard in Live than you will in Jam, because the players in Live are more likely to steal the ball from you as you ponder which play to call!

There are numerous camera angles to choose from in Jam 99, and even an option that lets you create your own vantage point. However, since the camera angle becomes fixed, you're not as likely to be as satisfied

guy in 2nd place (if not another one of your players scoring 20+) will be averaging about 12 points a game. The box scores will show all the other games at 44-38 or something like that — again, not good!

In Jam mode, the game plays similar to simulation mode, except that dunks become crazy flips and twirls, and you can knock the guy down without being called for a foul. Oh, and "He's on Fire" has been replaced with "He's got mad cow disease." Odd, to say the least (but funny).

GRAPHICS

NBA Jam 99 sports a nice looking hi-rez background, so all of the different arenas look top-notch. The players, on the other hand, have squared off extremities — big block feet and shovel-shaped hands. If you can get past this (and you will), then the player's other details look fine. The polygonal characters all animate well, but you will notice that the Jazz players seem to be a bit more animated than the rest (they even got Hornacek's face wiping move at the free throw line). One thing that I did notice was that the rim seems to be a tad on the small side, though, kinda like the rims at the county fair!

SOUND

Compared to NBA Live's minimalist approach

with the custom angle as you are with one of the standard ones that move with the action. The 5-on5 simulation mode plays well, and the computer is a tough opponent at the higher difficulty settings. Most people will find that playing five minute quarters is long enough, as the clock moves slowly. You can expect to score in the 100 point range at 5 minute quarters, but the thing that bugs me is that the rest of the league seems to be playing 2 minute quarters. When you go to track the league leaders, your best guy will be scoring 30 a night, while the

(just a PA guy), NBA Jam 99 sports play-by-play, color, and PA announcers. The problem is that all three of them talk at the same time (at least a little, anyway), and the play-by dude NEVER shuts up! And, if I hear "He inbounds the ball" one more time, I think I'll go postal! And, to really make you crazy, Bill Walton does the color, so you get to listen to him WHINE all game long — it borders on torture ("Let 'em PLAY", "Goodness, gracious, sakes alive"). It's enough to make you go straight to the options menu and toggle the announcing to "OFF".

CONCEPT

The 'Jam' concept was original about seven years ago, and the 5-on-5 simulation game of hoops hasn't been original for twenty years, but , I guess combining the two (much like chocolate and peanut butter) adds a bit more flavor to the equation. Of course, with Live 99 also featuring an arcade mode that is very much in the Jam tradition, then even its inclusion in Jam 99 is not all that earth-shattering.

SHELF LIFE

Besides the two previously mentioned play styles, NBA Jam 99 also includes a Three Point contest (as does Live 99) and a Free Throw contest. I guess now's a good time to mention that Iguana tried something new
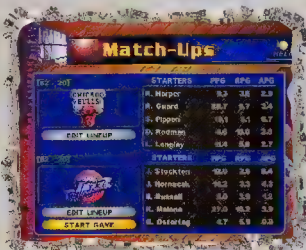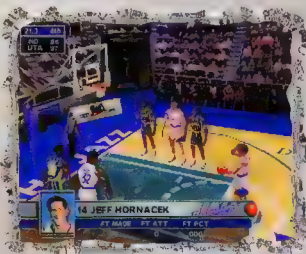
with the way free throws are shot in Jam 99; you basically have to fight the analog stick to get the ball in the cylinder, then hit the 'shoot' button before the ball moves out of the desired spot. It works OK, but can make for some long trips to the charity stripe. Anyway, with all of the different play options and choices, then you have to believe that Jam 99 will be able to keep you playing until next season.

CONCLUSION

NBA Jam 99, much like Acclaim's first attempt with QB Club, suffers from a series of rough spots that keep it from being all that it could. While fun and fast paced at some points, the game can turn out to be slow and frustrating at others. With a few few nips and tucks, Jam should be in pretty good shape next year, but this time around it will have to take second place behind EA's smoother and more playable NBA Live 99.

ERIC

THE 64 SCORE				
GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
6	8	5	7	8

OVERALL SCORE	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

M.I.A.: GAMEPLAY

Jumping through hoops to enter the Basketball arena, Fox Sports Interactive has put the finishing touches on their NCAA Basketball title for the N64, Fox Sports College Hoops '99. Considering that the Nintendo basketball field is currently devoid of college hoops games (EA Sports hasn't officially announced their NCAA March Madness game, yet), the time would seem good to hit the market and fill that void. Fox Sports College Hoops '99 is certainly coming in heavy with 120 NCAA teams, so it's off to a good start. Let's see if they can keep up the momentum.

GAMEPLAY

This game offers a host of features, including preseason, full season, and post season conference tournaments, and the NCAA Tournament, including the Final Four — which is played out in the St. Petersburg's Tropicana Field. There is a Freshman mode that has no out-of-bounds in effect and

other rules are overlooked as well. All other modes have the standard college basketball rules in force. The game comes packed with 120 top teams, including their logos and reasonable facsimiles of their home courts. The game compiles team and player statistics in several categories and will furnish post-game awards. You will be told of the weaknesses and strengths of each player to help aid in waging the best counter-attacks. Things like their Rebounding, Handling, Three Pointers, Desire, Free Throws, Blocking, Jam Factor, Low Post and Power are but some of a plethora of attributes that are mentioned. This comes at the hands of a very intuitive interface, that is easy to read and use. While the actual player names are a "no-no" based upon NCAA rules, the teams have been configured with the correct player attributes based upon anticipated team rosters. You will find suspicious names like Winding, Ricciardi, Lorino and many others you may recognize.
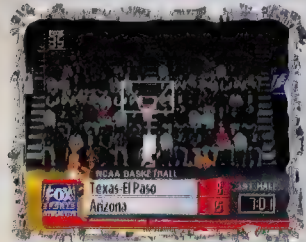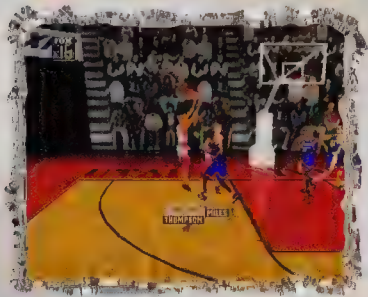
You can view all this action from one of six available camera angles. In addition, your controller can be configured with other than the default settings, and the game is played with the aid of analog control. The passing system is directional and, for the most part, is responsive. At times, though, the passing seems plagued by some inaccuracies.

While on defense you can execute the normal shot blocking, steal attempts and fouls. Up to eight different defensive formations can be called-up on-the-fly. These formations include 1-3-1 and 1-2-2 zones, as well as packed zones, double teams and the full court press. If your team is being smacked about shamelessly, they will talk to you by uttering things like "HELP!" to get your attention. Coverage in man-to-man defense is slow to react, and other sets and formations show signs of not being implemented correctly. Offensive sets can
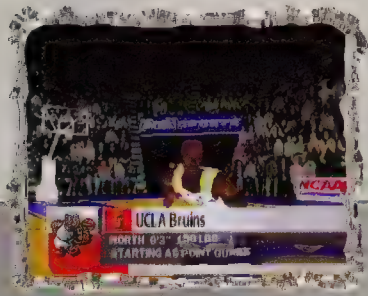
also be called-up, and they include the Low and High Post, in addition to Isolation and a 3-Point play.

The player's strides are screwy at times, with players sliding across the floor on one foot (a la Michael Jackson). This happens when the animation gets bogged down while a player has the other foot cocked up in the air. Why this happens is a good question, and one we hope the developer will address, should they do a sequel to this game. The collision is another area that is plagued by flaws. You have heard of the Vulcan Mind-Meld? Now meet the Body-Blend. Often times
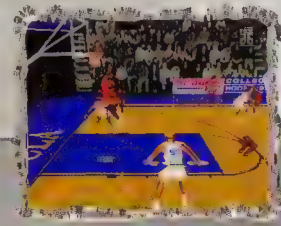
players will mysteriously pass right through one another's bodies. With all these glaring flaws in place, one just can't get past the feeling that this game shows several signs of not being finished. This is rather unfortunate, because many aspects of this title show serious promise, with one of them being the less frequent ability to drive to the hole consistently unscathed. That is something that most other basketball titles are beleaguered by.

So, after sitting down with this game, playing more then a few quarters of some college hoops, one walks away feeling that it is not all that much fun.
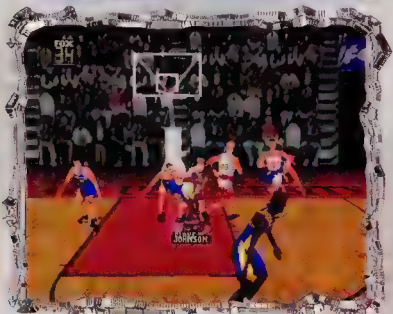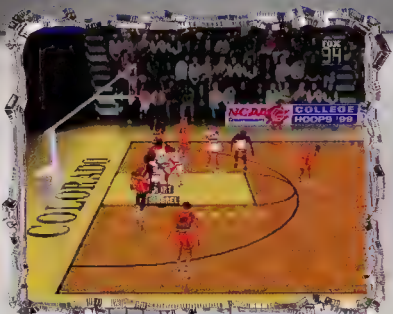
The speed is slow, the players skate around like Scott Hamilton after too many Margaritas, and the court dimensions relative to the player's sizes is not right. All-in-all, a decent effort that gets overshadowed by glaring deficiencies.

GRAPHICS

The player models are a bit blocky and on the rough side of the scale. The uniform textures are also clearly suffering from the first generation blues. There is definitely a bit of blur here, so much so that the names and numbers on the players

jerseys severely bleed and become illegible as the players move down court. This is especially true with dark numbers on light jerseys. The transitional animations are very choppy and bog the game down when trying to run the fastbreak. Which leads us to the frame-rate. The frame-rate in FSCH '99 is definitely labored. It is evident at all times, and becomes even more suspect when several players are under the rim vying for a loose ball. There is noticeable draw-in of the court textures and markings when moving up-court. The courts do exhibit a nice sheen and there are limited reflections of the players' feet animated nicely throughout the game. Not the best overall graphics package, but certainly not the worst either.

SOUND

The music in the game, while repetitive, is nicely done and sounds great. There is no commentary whatsoever, and that does not bode well for Z-Axis', effort here considering the inclusion of such chatter in most sports titles coming out these days. The players run around shouting things like "Piglet" which is actually supposed to be "Pick Left." And, after hearing some freshman continuously yell, "One more year," you may be inclined to go a bit nuts on your nearest pet or little brother. The ball sounds and sneakers squeaking are "all good." There is even a band that plays inspirational tunes
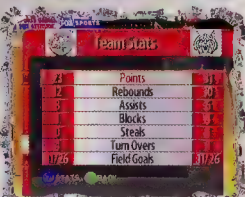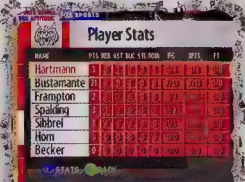
throughout the games to keep that college feeling alive and well. Z-Axis definitely got many aspects of sound implementation right. Now, they just need to work on making all the voices of consistent quality.

CONCEPT

Basketball is basketball — Right? Not so fast. While there have been many basketball games released over the years, there have been but a scant few good college basketball games. Actually, that may be stretching things a bit. With this effort Z-Axis has created a game that is playable from the perspective that it is a college b-ball simulation, and it does embody many college aspects of the sport., but it is conceptually flawed in that it lacks many fundamental attributes. Hopefully, as stated earlier, they will clean this title up more and give it the fair shake it deserves at being the premier N64 college hoops simulation.

SHELF LIFE

Player's impressions of this game will wane quickly once they have had the chance to give all the options and modes a thorough spin. The novelty of playing through a full season or into a tournament mode will be staunchly tested. There are many games that one must play to get to the Big Dance. Finding players willing to repeatedly suffer through the inane gameplay found in this title will be a sure task. It is likely
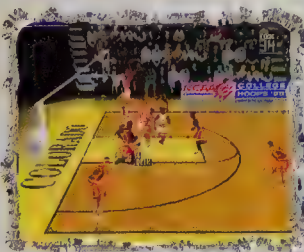
that FSCH '99 will live a short and steep excitement curve that will drop shortly afterward.

CONCLUSION

The examination of this title has not been without some fun. Getting past the graphic complaints, and the programming bugs in the animation department, there is a core game of basketball to be found lurking within. Glaring flaws aside, FSCH '99 remains the only college basketball game on the N64, and therefore, by default, is the best of its kind on the system. Straying away from this brand of logic however, this game does come to market with some issues that need to be addressed before it can ever be taken seriously. Whether this engine is salvageable or not, Z-Axis has gotten their foundation poured. Now it just needs smoothing over.

FABIAN

THE 64 SCORE

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
5	6	8	6	4

OVERALL SCORE   0 1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10

EA SPORTS'

NBA LIVE 99

"EA DOES IT AGAIN"

The NBA Live series has been the dietary staple of many a gamer, especially those predisposed to enjoying a good basketball game. With this installment in the NBA Live lineage, EA Sports has done some nice things to bring to market a decent hoops simulation, along with a cool arcade mode as well. We put the game through its paces and came up with the following observations.

GAMEPLAY

Serving up the ball has been something EA Sports has done well many times, and this time they are trying it out with their first N64 effort, NBA Live 99. For starters, the game offers "Pro-Action" artificial intelligence, giving the CPU players more "self-induced thought patterns (whatever this means)." The 3 Point Contest has been included; which was well received by all when EA first implemented the feature. There is also Direct Passing and they have included a quick start Arcade Mode as well.
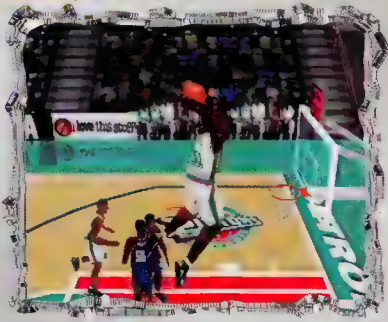
Players can call for passes, hand check, cross-over, spin, back players down, call for a pick and, of course, slam and jam with monster authority. Quarter lengths from 2 to 12 minutes can be chosen, along with four different difficulty levels, ranging from Rookie to Superstar. The penalties can be toggled on or off individually and, of course, your players can be made to fatigue as in real-life. There is liberal use of the Rumble Pak, so you can feel hard checks when driving the lane. As with all of the "Live" series games, when one of your players gets on a hot streak, his icon indicator begins to flash letting you know to feed him the ball. In the shot department, there are manual and automatic alley-oops, leaners, jumpers, mid-air passes, and a host of well animated slam dunks to choose from. When your

PLAYER OF THE GAME

Alonzo Mourning
Center

Points	
Rebounds	
Blocks	
Assists	
Steals	

QUARTER STATS

MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES — MIAMI HEAT

	Turnovers	
	Fouls	
	Timeouts	
	Longest Run	
	Scoring Drought	
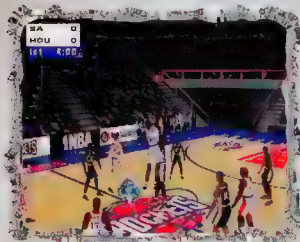
players are on defense, they can face-up the ball handler, hand check, make steal attempts, double team and block shots. Blocking shots in Live 99 gets less and less frequent as the difficulty level rises. Previous installments of this series have been plagued by too many blocked shots. Apparently, EA has toned this down a bit and made the game perform more realistically in this regard. However, steals abound in the game to a point where they are a bit ridiculous. You can call various NBA play strategies, make substitutions and inflict some defensive pressures with real NBA defensive formations.

The "Live" series has always had one of the most configurable camera angles in cyber sports basketball, and this version comes through with a host of playable angles and levels of zoom so you can get as close or as far away from

the action as you like. And, of course, there are Exhibition, Season, Playoff and Championship modes. The rosters are current as they can be, and the uniforms are up to snuff, as are the courts and logos. There is also a Create Player Mode, in addition to Drafting and Custom Team creation. For those not familiar with EA Sports' Create Player flexibility, the option allows for the configuring of everything from height, weight, left-handed to right-handed, as well as skin tone and hair configurations. A solid interface moves the player

through all these options and features with on-screen help along the way, in case you get lost.

Playing Live 99, one can instantly feel the responsiveness of the control. The game handles quite well, and the players don't seem to exhibit a lot of the EA "slide" that has marred the control aspect of many of their basketball efforts in the past. The players move fluidly, and have a number of animations that give them a convincing look and feel. The court dimensions seem dead on, and the players sizes relative to the court and one

another are pretty darn accurate. Formations and sets are executed quickly and, in most instances, correctly, so calling plays on the fly becomes a viable part of the strategy, since you can see the formations change on-command. Live 99 has all the goods and gameplay one could reasonably expect, and what is best about all this is that the game is fun as a result.

GRAPHICS

The player models in Live 99 are terrific, by
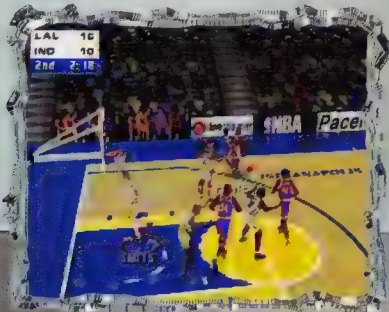
polygonal standards. Not only that but they animate well, too. The textures are very good for the skin tones, and especially the hair. When you see players that sport crew cuts, you can actually see the fade of their hair, and the slightly bald area near the top-center of their heads. This game sports some of the most convincingly rendered player models found in a basketball game to date. The courts and arenas are magnificently beautiful and have no blur or fuzziness to them whatsoever. There are the now standard reflections, and the net animation are once again the best in its class. The most important new feature is that the game can select up 30 different facial expressions so that players can fuss or gloat in your face! This has not been done before, and it really works well. Live 99 is one great looking game of hoops, simple as that!

SOUND

Great music, excellent sound effects and more voice than one might have expected, bring the sound package in Live 99 to the top tier in its class. This game makes very good use of the Nintendo sound set-up and can really help get you into the game with the varying crowd reactions and announcer calls. There is not as much voice in this game as one would like, but it is enough to remind

you once in a while that this is supposed to be a high energy game of professional basketball.

CONCEPT

The concept of doing professional sports as video games has been exploited by EA Sports better than anyone thus far. Each year, players feverishly await the next installment of their favorite sports games, in hopes of finding a new experience inside the most recent packaging. As with any successful game, once their is a proven formula in place, not many changes are going to be implemented that will dynamically impact the overall gameplay package. Same goes for Live 99. There is nothing really new except for the aforementioned face-mapping but that does not detract from Live 99 being a great game.

SHELF LIFE

This is the kind of presentation and gameplay that makes one want to play through entire seasons. Not much more can be said of this game, except for the fact that, after several incarnations of the series, Live 99 does not lose much of its appeal to a feeling of "been there, done that." Sure, we have all played this game for some time now, but with each new animation that is added comes another

level strategy implementation that must be learned to properly put these animations to good use. This brings a little something new to the game and edges it upward on the replay value curve just a tad.

CONCLUSION

NBA Live 99 has once again lived up to its heritage as being one of the best basketball games to grace a console system; in this case the Nintendo 64. Live's above average graphics, coupled with a nice tactile and responsive control scheme make for a good game of video basketball. Add to that fact the real players and teams of the NBA, and it is no wonder that many people will find lots of enjoyment from this EA Sports benchmark offering. If basketball simulations are your thing, and you have an N64 game system, NBA Live 99 is currently the game to beat.

FABIAN

THE 64 SCORE				
GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
8	8	8	5	7

OVERALL SCORE	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10

THQ'S

WCW VS NWO REVENGE

"THQ APPLIES THE 'SLEEPER'"
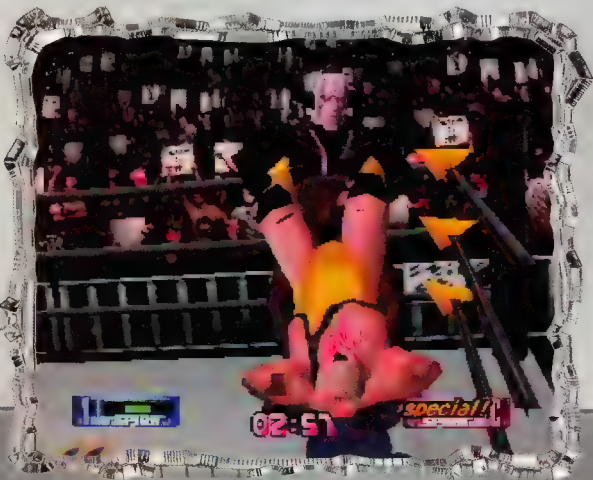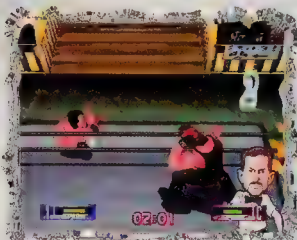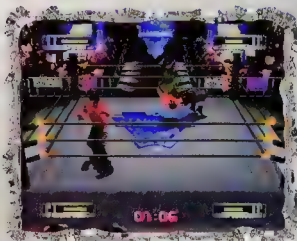
WCW vs. NWO REVENGE is the latest in the line of wrestling games from THQ created for either the N64 or the Playstation. In the recent past, games like WCW vs. NWO World Tour and WWF Warzone have been released and have set the standard for pro wrestling video games. As in the last N64 release, WCW vs. NWO World Tour, Revenge lays it all on the line. There are some 80 wrestlers from WCW and NWO, as well as some made up characters from some made up organizations, and some hidden characters. Revenge has a lot to offer to the trailer park circuit, so open up some Shasta Cola, a bag of pork rinds and Let's get ready to... Better not finish that or Mr. Buffer might sue for copyright infringement. But, you know what

we mean.

GAMEPLAY

Revenge starts out with the basic options; such as exhibition, championship, and special match which includes a battle royal of up to 40 wrestlers, as well as a handicap match. There is also a costume change option, which allows you to be Hollywood Hulk Hogan before he added the Hollywood to his name. You know what we're talking about, the Hulkster in his yellow and red outfit? Remember that? In the Championship option, you are able to fight for the World Heavyweight, US Heavyweight, Cruiserweight, Tag Team, or TV titles. Winning the belt in one of the divisions will unlock one of the secret characters for you to use

later on in the game. There are some surprises, so look for the secret characters. Overall, the gameplay is outstanding. There is such a repertoire of moves in Revenge that you will constantly find yourself accomplishing moves that you swore were not in the game. Each wrestler has his own signature move, as well as finishing moves and submission holds. We have spent countless hours playing Revenge and are still doing new moves each time we play. Compared to the latest wrestling release, WWF Warzone, Revenge is very different, and yet very similar. Where Warzone has a number of options for multiplayers, Revenge seems to have just the basics. Warzone has
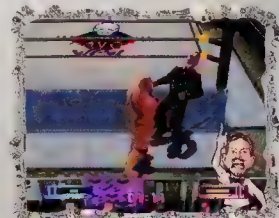
only one title on the line, Revenge has many. Warzone has the steel cage matches and Revenge doesn't. Revenge has over 75 wrestlers; Warzone has something like 15. Although, with the option to create your own wrestler in Warzone, the number of wrestlers is unlimited. If THQ can come up with the create your own wrestler option in a future realease, then there will not be another wrestling video game for a long time that will

have the ability to compete with Revenge. The competition in Revenge is very good for every level of gamer. There are difficulty levels of easy, normal and hard which makes it more challenging as you get better. In comparison, Revenge is not too much different from WCW vs. NWO World Tour. Some of the options are different and there are some added features, like the secret wrestlers, and some other exciting things, such as other

Hollywood Hogan

were very real looking and in Revenge they are a little more cartoon like. However, this does not take anything away from the game. The characters are polygonal and the movement of each wrestler is quite fluid. There are times when the guy seems to glide around the ring rather than walking and that is a little disappointing. All of the movements, from your basic arm-bar to the complex power bomb, look very real. There are no glitches in these movements. You will be impressed.

SOUND

Revenge sounds like you are at the arena. The cheers and the boos are all sounding great as you are tangled up with your opponent. The nice padded sound of your opponent being slammed to the mat is as real as when you watch Monday Nitro. The famous "OOH YEAHH!" of the Macho Man Randy Savage sounds just like him. If you've never been to the "real" thing, playing revenge is about as close as you are going to get without actually buying a ticket and going to the arena.

members of the NWO escorting NWO wrestlers to the squared circle. Playing in the exhibition mode, you just might see someone coming out of the rafters for a surprise attack. We won't mention Sting's name but, oops. Well the cat's out of the bag. Oh well, you would have found out sooner or later.

GRAPHICS

Graphically, Revenge is quite impressive. In Warzone, the graphics

CONCEPT

As far as the concept goes, well, it's a wrestling game. There is not much else to say. It's a great wrestling game indeed, but there are at least two other great wrestling games on the market already. An improvement of a previously released game is about as original as Friday the 13th part 7. The story line is virtually the same, but there are a few new things thrown in there.

SHELF-LIFE

The shelf life on this one could be long and it could be short. If THQ keeps coming out with wrestling game after wrestling game, this one would be just another Beanie Baby. You could collect them all, but what's the point? If THQ stops here for a while, then the shelf life on this one will be long. You have to wonder what will happen to those games that have been released up until now. There will be a lot of dust on those older versions of wrestling games. WCW Revenge will be on the shelf until THQ comes out with an updated version. Perhaps with all of the drama going on over in the WWF, we might even see Stone Cold Steve Austin on the next WCW NWO game.
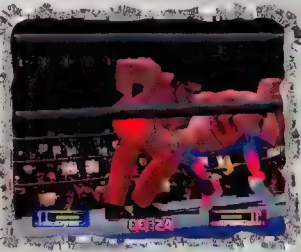
CONCLUSION

Overall, Revenge is a great game improving on a great game, and competing against a great game. There are a lot of ways to compare Revenge with Warzone and World Tour. However, when it comes to a wrestling match, it would be a handicap match with Warzone and World Tour gunning for the best of them all, WCW vs. NWO Revenge. Although it is not a submission victory, both Warzone and World Tour can't seem to get their shoulders off of the mat. The main difference between Warzone and Revenge is just like the difference between watching WCW and watching WWF. WCW is flat-out more entertaining than the WWF.

SCOTT

THE 64 SCORE				
GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
9	8	7	7	8

OVERALL SCORE 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10

ACCLAIM'S
EXTREME G 2 (XG2)

STILL THE LEADER OF THE "PAK"
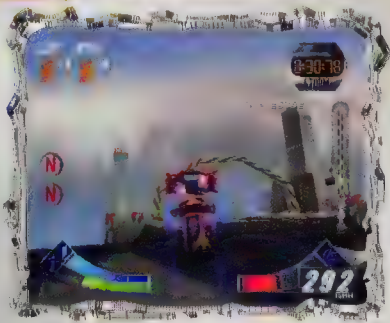
The Techno-racer category is heating up on the N64 this year with the advent of F-Zero X, S.C.A.R.S. and the formidable Wipeout 64. This genre, which was brought to popularity by F-Zero on SNES, has really gotten a lot of attention as of late — primarily due to F-Zero's return to the competition, and Psygnosis' decision to bring their popular Wipeout title to the N64. So, what was once sole territory for Probe last year, at least in the N64 arena, is now a feeding ground for any title not up to the challenge. Well... it is here. It has been played, and here is how it shapes up!

GAMEPLAY

Boasting upwards of 36 tracks, XG2 takes place in 12 different environments (made up of three tracks each), from city-like backdrops to underwater caverns. Places like Lumania Fountains, Aquanor Harbour, Sensara Skyline Drop and Mezar Virs Wind Farm are but a few of the many scenic terrains awaiting

the player. Using a 16MB cartridge, XG2 is loaded to the gills with gameplay. As with the last incarnation, this game has an "Extreme" variety of undulating, twisting tracks to conquer. There are definitely more jumps in this version and their are also hidden shortcuts and tunnels to discover. Weapons can be activated or left off. Power-up icons are littered throughout the track environments to enhance weapons configurations, and Bikes can now sport rear-firing rockets, in addition to the magnetic mines that have been added for your pleasure.

There are about ten different bikes to choose from, some of which now flex in the middle for added realism. Speaking of the bikes, each one is different in terms of acceleration, weapons, shields, handling, and top speed. Playing with these various pieces of machinery, one can discern the differences in handling rather easily. There are also three secret bikes that must be earned before they are released to the playing
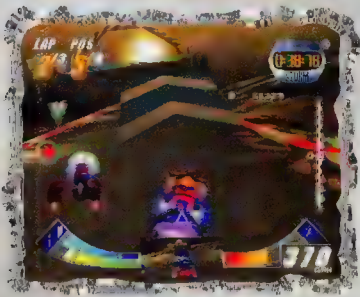
public. One such bike, the Venom Superbike, is markedly faster and better equipped than any of the standard rides available. The handling is also better than last time around, and the tracks have been made bigger, wider and, ultimately, faster than before. Handling is rather intuitive after just a few jaunts around the track. The analog control seems less fidgety than last year's effort and, within a few laps, you will find it somewhat easier to keep your bike centered on the track. While Roaring around the tracks, the Rumble Pak will come to life each time you scrape the sides, land from a jump and, of course, when taking damage from incoming fire. To help aid in navigating the twisty track designs, Probe have supplied a floating 3D overhead arrow display, that will fade into view a few hundred feet before any
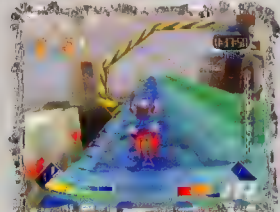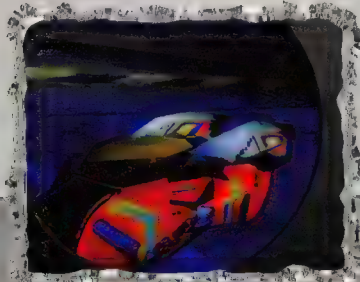
major turn springs up. The slight problem is that the game is so fast at times, trying to view this thing is a bit tough. The riders have now been given personas, and they will show their emotions upon winning or losing a race by pumping their fists in the air, or kicking their bike
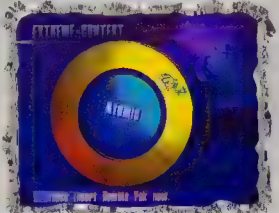
into a flaming abyss; which they reluctantly must then follow.

Probe have definitely gotten the speed aspect of this title down pat, all the while keeping the control facet of XG2 manageable and taut. Despite the control being rather good, the game is still blisteringly fast, at times almost to the point that it is uncontrollable. It is like trying to tame a wild horse at times. Playing this game, one can instantly develop a real liking for the title. The implementation is snug, with barely anything negative happening that will adversely affect the gameplay — except the Bronco Bustin' I mentioned. Add to

JUDGEMENT 64

XG2 sports some significant improvements in track design and detail. The tracks have been designed to be more challenging, and make use of techniques designed to draw one's attention away from the draw-in that is constantly going on at all times. Being able to see much deeper into the distance bodes well for more accurate interpretation of track characteristics and, therefore, more intuitive navigation. New lighting effects have been implemented, giving the game a visual appeal more akin to Wipeout; with glowing trails, lens flares and slick weapons effects that light up their surroundings. Using dynamic lighting effects, projectiles will now light up their path as they travel to their mark. There are also some environmental effects, such as lighting flashes during races and environmental mapping of reflections onto bike surfaces. A picture-in-picture view is used to simulate the rearview mirror, which will automatically come on when you have engaged a rear firing countermeasure or projectile. And the frame rate seems to have been improved over last year's effort.

SOUND

The sound on the N64 can only go but so far. In XG2 it has been taken to new limits with effective use of the chip-set — delivering some very nice sounding Techno-tunage. I thought several years ago, that I would bore of Techno

all this a Battle Mode that involves going after tanks in closed arenas, the ability to break the sound barrier..."Kaboom!" and the multi-player capabilities, and you can easily see why XG2 is a game for the "Ages".

GRAPHICS

Last year's game was blazingly fast but was plagued by an over-use of fog effects to mask severe pop-up. The good news this time around, is that the view distance has been improved, with the fog effects being pushed further into the distance. In addition,

music. On the contrary, I have grown to enjoy good Techno music each year, and really enjoy playing a pulse-driven game that has been properly endowed with appropriate aural stimuli. XG2 does a nice job in this department, and should hold its own with the likes of F-Zero X and Wipeout 64.

CONCEPT
The conceptual attributes are derivative without doubt. This type of game has been done many times before, but still maintains much of its original appeal; especially with players that truly enjoy by such games. Therefore, conceptually, with the combat element, short-cuts, and bike varieties, there really is not much here that is new to the genre. Nonetheless, XG2 has its audience already, and with this effort can easily pick up a few more followers. This game is a clear step ahead for Probe in terms of presentation, execution and evolution, and that deserves praise, regardless.

SHELF LIFE
Last year, Extreme G should have enjoyed a healthy level of replay value, as there was no competition for its style of play. This year, all of that is going to change, with F-Zero X and Wipeout 64 now coming to the platform. Psygnosis has enjoyed being the top-tier game of its kind on PlayStation for a couple of years.
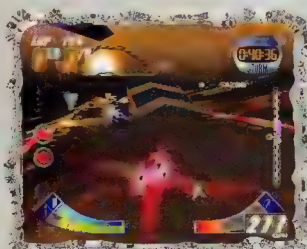
It will be interesting to see how XG2 and Wipeout 64 fair against each other with F-Zero X, an old Nintendo mainstay, once again in the fray. Either way, XG2 is solid and formidable in its own right, and should carve a niche for itself, in spite of the existence of similar titles.

CONCLUSION
If you enjoy a good racing game and own a Nintendo 64, then XG2 is something you should add to your collection of titles. It is a game that showcases great visual effects, a supreme sense of blistering speed, and improves upon the original, in terms of gameplay and execution. Besides, all things being equal, XG2 does embody physics that are different t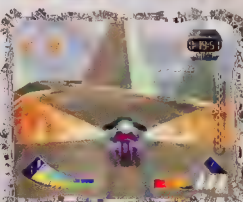han the hover-style racers, and is ultimately a different take on the experience. So, prepare to hemorrhage-loads of sweat and time into this title, because XG2 is crotch-rocket heaven!

FABIAN

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
9	9	8	7	7

OVERALL SCORE: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10

MIDWAY'S

WIPEOUT 64

"LOOK MA... I'M HOVERING"
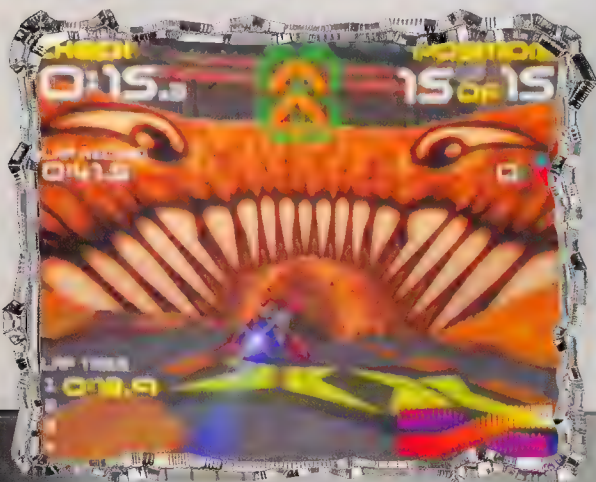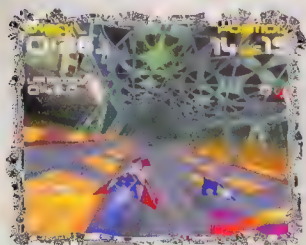
Unless you've been living in a cave, in which case you wouldn't be reading this magazine. since you don't have electricity to play videogames, you've probably heard of the name Wipeout (If the first thing that comes to your mind is the Surfaris' song, you're probably too old to be playing videogames). Wipeout is, of course, a futuristic racing/combat game that was one of the early releases for the Sony PlayStation in 1995. Not only did it set the standard for the genre, but it also helped put Psygnosis on the (PlayStation) map. So, what better title to launch Psygnosis as a Nintendo 64 developer? (What were you expecting anyway —The City of Lost Children 64?)

When you think of Wipeout, you probably think of three things: sharp graphics, blazing speed, and a techno soundtrack from real-life bands. Since the N64 has become known for fog and "fuzzy" graphics, moderate speed, and sampled music, a Wipeout port was bound to be a serious challenge. Luckily for us, Psygnosis has met the challenge and given us a superb version of their classic racing game.
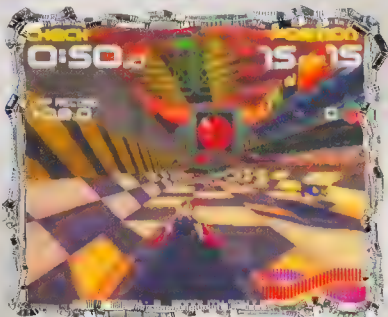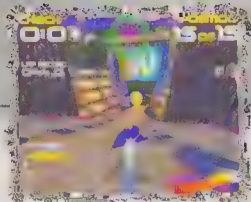
GAMEPLAY

The object of this racing game is simple-reach the finish line in first place. Keeping your vehicle on the track is not so simple. This is anti-gravity racing, after all, and your vehicle skims and bounces along the surface. The tracks are akin to roller coasters with numerous twists and turns, and you'll often need to use your air brakes to keep from slamming into the side. If you do collide with a wall and slow down, you've got to run over speed boosts located throughout the course. Along with the speed
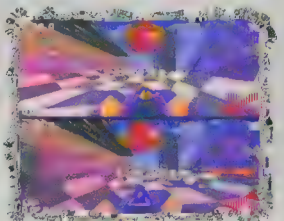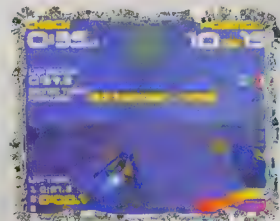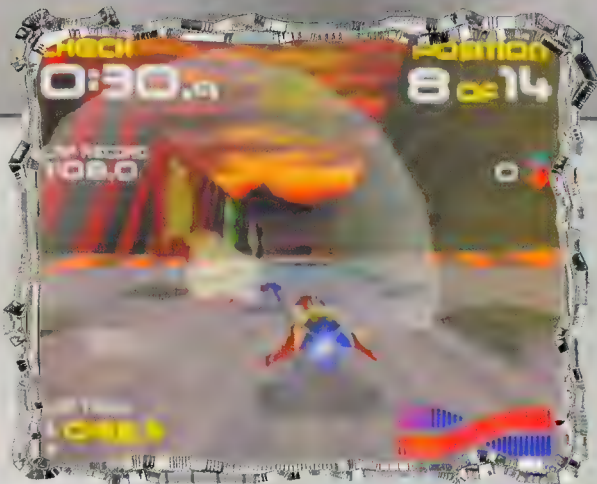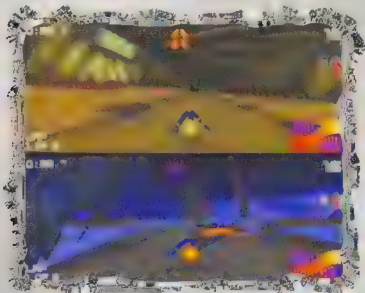
boosts, you'll also be able to run over grids which equip your ship with a weapon. Only one weapon can be activated at a time, and running over subsequent weapons grids will not have any effect until you drop or discharge the active weapon. There are more than 10 different weapons available, including such things as a shield, turbo boost, temporary auto pilot, mines, electrical bolts, and a shockwave which literally lifts the track ahead of you up into the air. The weapons are represented by a small icon in the top center of the screen, and their availability depends upon the type of race you are competing in. Lest you think your fellow racers are sitting ducks, they too have the ability to collect and use weapons as well. When an opponent is about to fire a weapon at you or drop mines

in your path, the computer gives you a warning. The game is over when you have completed the requisite number of laps, or when your ship's shield has been depleted by enemy weapons or from hitting the side of the track. There are six regular tracks and one locked track, as well as four different classes to race in (which affect the top speed and the time allotted between checkpoints). There are also five different vehicles to choose from, each with its own attributes. The time-trial mode is still present, but this time

you can race against your "ghost." Wipeout 64 is also rumble pack compatible, which adds another element to the game.

One major drawback of the original Wipeout and its sequel, Wipeout XL, was the fact that the game could only be played by a single player. A link cable option was available, but how many people had two televisions, two PlayStations, and two copies of Wipeout? Thanks to the Nintendo 64's split-screen ability and four controller ports, Wipeout 64 can

JUDGEMENT 64

are looking at a PlayStation game. There is no fog, and the graphics are clear and bright. The courses are detailed, and the menu screens are well-designed with icons and futuristic fonts. As the game progresses, you notice that there is some draw-in-especially in the two-player mode. Fortunately, the courses have been designed in such a way that the draw-in does not affect gameplay. Despite the elimination of the backgrounds and tunnels in three and four-player mode, on the whole Wipeout's graphics are excellent.

SOUND

Even though the game comes on a cartridge, Wipeout 64 features 8 different techno soundtracks by the bands PC Music, Fluke, and the Propeller Heads. The tunes are somewhat repetitive, but isn't that what techno music is about? The driving beat is perfect for a fast-paced game of this type. Aside from the music, the weapons and explosion sounds are also nicely done and there are also computer voices which announce weapons fire, shield status, and elimination of opponents.

CONCEPT

Futuristic race/combat games are no

be played by up to four players. In order to maintain speed, the three and four-player modes eliminate all backgrounds and tunnels. Unfortunately, the small size of the ships and tracks make it more difficult to play. Thankfully, the two-player split screen fares much better and even retains the background graphics, albeit with a lot of draw-in.

GRAPHICS

At first glance, you might be convinced you

longer unique, but that is because Psygnosis itself set the standard with Wipeout and Wipeout XL. Wipeout 64 doesn't add much to the original concept apart from different tracks and a "challenge" mode. The game is essentially a Nintendo version of Wipeout XL, but since it only copies itself, I think it can still be considered somewhat original.

SHELF LIFE

There are an average number of courses and vehicles to choose from. The time trial mode is also practically a standard option in racing games nowadays, as is the multi-player mode. The brand-new "challenge mode" adds a lot to Wipeout 64's replay value. Picture the license tests in Gran Turismo or the challenge races in Diddy Kong Racing. There are 18 different challenges — six races, six time trials, and six weapons challenges. In each, you are given a specific goal to accomplish, such as beating a certain time record with a pre-selected vehicle, or destroying a certain number of enemies with limited types of weapons. Completing a challenge opens up the next one and so on. It will take some time to beat all of these challenges, and they require you to think and play the
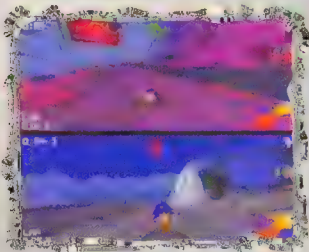
game slightly differently than usual. Thus, overall, the shelf life is somewhat longer than the average racer or even the prior versions of Wipeout.

CONCLUSION

I was a bit skeptical of the Nintendo 64's ability to handle a Wipeout port, and I feared that Psygnosis would not be able to keep the fast-paced nature of the game intact. I shouldn't have worried. If you've never owned a PlayStation, and you enjoy racing games, this is your chance to see what all the fuss over Wipeout was about. For once, here is a game that looks and plays great on both systems. If you're already a fan of Wipeout, the new tracks, multi-player mode, and challenge mode might just entice you to buy the N64 version. This is an excellent game which I highly recommend. **MARK**

THE 64 SCORE				
GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
9	9	8	7	7

OVERALL SCORE: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10

JUDGEMENT 64

RUSH 2: EXTREME RACING

YOU'VE GOT TO "DO THE DEW" IN RUSH 2
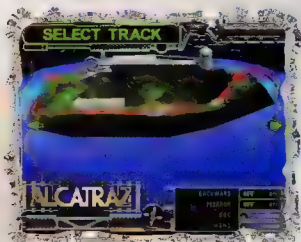
Midway and developer Atari Games are back behind the wheel with Rush 2: Extreme Racing, the sequel to last year's incredible arcade translation, San Francisco Rush: Extreme Racing. More than just a sequel, though, as Rush 2 was not an arcade game. All of the tracks and cars are new for this version, which also includes the famous arcade course, Alcatraz (The Rock), which was also a hidden track in the original title. Rush 2, as the name would have it, is no longer about San Francisco. This time around, various cities from the East coast to the West have been added, each with a sprinkling of their own real-life landmarks. Let's see what's new with Rush 2...

GAMEPLAY

As mentioned above, there are seven new tracks, based on American cities, and three additional tracks that are a mix of cleverness and insanity (more on those later). Rushers can take a spin through Seattle, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, New York (Downtown), New York (Uptown), Hawaii, and through Alcatraz Island (near San Francisco). Each of these circuits features many recognizable landmarks; in Las Vegas, you'll race down the Strip and see many of the crazy hotels that glow in the neon light, in L.A., you'll see a bunch of familiar sights, ranging from Dodger Stadium, the "Hollywood" sign and UCLA, to the Capital Records building, and the Hollywood Bowl. In Seattle, you'll drive past the Space Needle, and in New York, you'll drive down Broadway, through the subway, past the Empire State building, over the Brooklyn Bridge, and right past Lady Liberty herself! And lastly, in Hawaii, you'll race down the beaches of Waikiki, past the Aloha Bowl, and up the big mountain, Diamond Head.

Just like in the original Rush, each course in Rush 2 has a multitude of shortcuts and alternate routes to take — some are pretty obvious to see, and others take a bit of searching in order to discover them. Now, getting back to those three "odd" courses; they are 1) Half Pipe, 2) Crash, and 3) Stunt. In the Half Pipe, you basically race down a big ol' piece of pipe that's split open at the top, although there's a lip on either side keeping you from getting out. The Crash track does some crisscrossing, and has a tunnel that's pretty tricky but, much like the Half Pipe, their inclusion into this game seems very unnecessary. The Stunt course, on the other hand, is an amazing conglomeration of jumps and multi-tiered levels that rewards you for pulling off amazing flips, twists, jumps, and hang time. Each time you pull off a certain stunt, and are able to land the vehicle safely, you'll be awarded a number of points. This course is not an actual track to be raced, but just a place to perform stunts — like a giant skateboard park for cars! This area is so cool, that you could easily watch an entire afternoon disappear as you continue to try and master jumps and earn points.
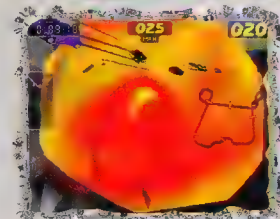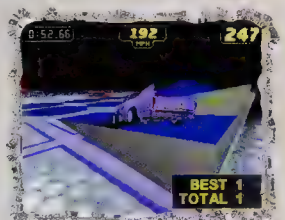
Of course, just like with SF Rush, Rush 2 is not all about competing in various races. The reality of it is, that the Rush series is about exploration, and more precisely, about finding those darned keys! There are now 12 keys hidden through out each track (there were roughly 6 each in SF Rush), and finding them is what

cans floating in the air, much like some of the keys. Now, in addition to finding the 12 keys in each track, you'll have to come up with four Mountain Dew cans!

GRAPHICS

Rush 2: Extreme Racing is still a pretty good looking game but, due to the number of tracks, and the sheer size of each course, Atari could not put Rush into Hi-rez mode, therefore it doesn't have quite the graphic punch that Titus' upcoming Roadster Challenge does. However, the tracks are really well designed, and all of the landmarks are instantly recognizable. New for Rush 2 is the ability to customize your car (there are 18 to choose from at the beginning) in a variety of ways. There are over thirty colors to choose from, accent colors can be added, there are 8 different types of stripes to select, 21 different rim selections, ten kinds of engine noises, and the ability to change your tires, suspension, and torque. Wow — that's a lot of cool stuff!

SOUND

Rush 2 delivers a variety of different musical selections as you race and search through each of the ten tracks. Most of it is decent, and neither irritating to the point where you want to turn it off, or enjoyable to the point

makes the game so much fun. You'll find yourself going through some of the most gravity defying maneuvers ever seen, in an attempt to snag a well hidden key. The statistics screen keeps track of how many of the keys you've found, along with the number of times you have raced that particular course, and your average lap time (and even the number of times that you crashed your car!). One other thing you'll find there is four soda shaped cans. Of course, by racing the different tracks, you probably already noticed the Mountain Dew

you want to turn it up so your neighbors can hear it. The engine sounds (10 of them, remember?), however, are a whole new story. From the high pitched whine of the Formula 1 engine, to the beefy roar of the V10, each engine has its own distinct sound, and makes playing a great game that much more enjoyable.

CONCEPT

Racing games are pretty much the staple of every home gaming console, and Rush 2 leads the way for the Nintendo 64. Although coming out with a sequel is neither a new concept or an earth-shattering occurrence, the delivery of a terrific title is always something to get excited about. Atari did a smart thing by recognizing the strength of SF Rush's key finding agenda, and increased the number of keys to find, as well as the challenge in finding them. A bonus point also goes to the concept score due to the fact that so many new options are available to the player.

SHELF LIFE

Much like the original, Rush 2 is a game that will be played for as long as you own your Nintendo 64. Yes, even after you've found every key, every can of soda, every

hidden car, and won each and every race, you'll still find yourself coming back to the game, because it's so much fun. Of course, to do all of that will require anywhere from 40 to 100 hours worth of your life, but you won't miss it! And, if you figure that most games are lucky to last you a quarter of that much time, then it just shows you how much more valuable Rush 2 is over the majority of the titles in your N64 library!

CONCLUSION

As good a game as the original San Francisco Rush was (we gave it a '9', after all), Rush 2 is all that and more. With all of the new features, the wonderfully designed tracks, and the endless amount of gameplay, awarding Rush 2: Extreme Racing the score of '9' is as easy of a decision to make as it should be for you to go out and pick up a copy of this great game!

ERIC

THE 64 SCORE				
GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
9	8	8	8	9

OVERALL SCORE	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 ⑨ 10

JUDGEMENT 64

TUROK 2: SEEDS OF EVIL

"DEATH TO THE DINO'S!"

There's no doubt about it, the original Turok: Dinosaur Hunter put Acclaim back on the map. For a company that was once known for really, really bad video games based on high-profile movie licenses, they've been able to pretty much do a complete turn around. A lot of their recent success has to do with Iguana Entertainment, a talented group of developers, artists and designers that are of the few (Rare, Nintendo, Midway) that have been able make the N64 sit up and do tricks that most developers only wish they could. With the sequel, Turok 2: Seeds of Evil, Acclaim and Iguana have been able to really show the difference between first and second generation software. Let's take a walk on the wild side and see what Turok 2 will offer gamers this year.

GAMEPLAY

I doubt you'd find many people willing to argue against the fact that the first Turok had few, but serious flaws. Of the most prevalent, the gameplay, while fun at first, became excruciatingly boring and painful to sit through. Because of the repetitive gameplay, huge, similarly textured levels and constant respawning of the enemies, getting through each level became a test of patience and an exercise in futility. Thankfully, the developers at Iguana addressed this problem and have made a much more rich and diversified game. Gone are the never-ending jungle levels and ever-present, multi-colored fogging effects (for the most part). In addition, there have been major improvements and retooling of the artificial intelligence engine. Enemies will dodge, jump into and out of doorways and ultimately retreat when attacked. They will also use environmental objects to hide behind, and then start lobbing bombs your way. If you try and run around the side and go in for the kill, they will circle around to the other side, like a secretary being chased around the desk by her boss. It's these intricate and detailed touches that make the game stand out from the rest.

Like the first, T2 is still a first-person perspective
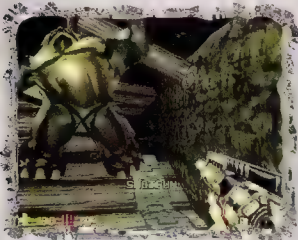
adventure with the emphasis on shooting and killing. Of course, with this style of game, there is going to be a certain level of violence and gore — and Turok delivers in bucket-loads. All of the enemies can be killed in various ways, each having certain points on their bodies that are susceptible to being severed and dismembered. As with Rare/Nintendo's Goldeneye, it's possible to kill an enemy with just one well-placed shot to the head. In fact, Iguana has included a Goldeneye-esque sniper mode that is activated in conjunction with both the Tek Bow or the Pulse Rifle, allowing you to zoom in close-up for the kill. What's more fun and satisfying (in a sick way) is using some of the more powerful weapons you acquire in the later levels to lop off arms, legs and even decapitate a head or two, then watch as thick spurts of hemoglobin and plasma gush, splatter and pour over the surrounding walls and floor. There's even a weapon called the Cerebral Bore, a sphere-like spiked projectile that will seek out an
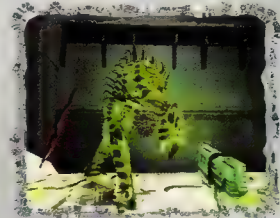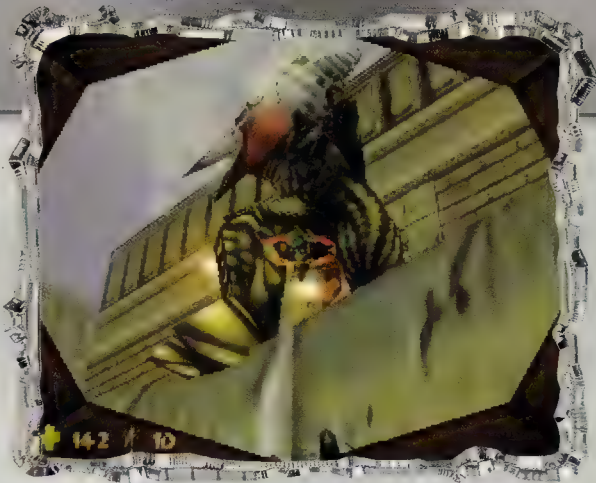
enemy and dig into its skull, then spit out the blood through its opposite end (anybody remember Phantasm?). With the typical age demographic of the N64 being what it is (8-14 year olds), there is an option to turn the blood off and on, giving parents a little more control over what their kids see.

The game starts where the first Turok left off. It seems the destruction of the Chronosceptre from the original game has awoken a new enemy named the Primagen. The Primagen's main goal is to eliminate the totems scattered throughout the Lost Land, freeing himself in the process. Unfortunately, by doing this, the universe
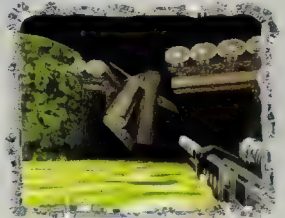
will be annihilated. Now it's up to Joshua Fireseed, the current Turok, to stop the Primagen from destroying the obelisks holding the Lost Land together and prevent the destruction of reality as we know it. Along the way, Turok will have some help, in the form of a female sidekick named Adon. She gives advice, as well as sets up save points throughout the game.

What about control? Yes, the control layout is the same as the first, although there is a "Golden" option which offers Goldeneye-like control over your character. Turok still has the same quirky jumping problems that I found in the first game (jumping in first-person can be quite a

CHILD RESCUED.

142 50

obscurity. While some of the levels feature cloudy or dark skies in which to hide the horizon, there is no pop-up or clipping, instead a pleasant fade-in of the level graphics reminiscent of the way Rare did it in Banjo and Kazooie. The enemies in the game are much more diversified than the last and, as with all of Iguana's titles, their animations are brilliant, detailed and fluid (especially the death animations), leaving no frames missing.

With the addition of the 4-meg RAM pack (which should now be available) plugged into the hardware, there are a variety of different resolution choices, which, up until now, has been an option pretty much only found in PC games. Once the pack is inserted, the options menu offers up either low res, low res letterboxed, high res or high res letter boxed modes. The high resolution mode, running at a smooth frame rate, at a resolution of 480X360, makes a huge difference to the point where, once you see it, you won't be able to play in low res ever again. I do have one gripe: The level environments, for the most part, are sparsely populated and you are never really confronted with more than two enemies on-screen at once. While the action is fast-paced, and dealing with the intelligent enemies can be challenging, it seems there is a certain sterility to the game because of the lack of multiple simultaneous enemies. I am certain this has to do with slow down problems that occur when you have too many objects on-screen at once.

chore when you're not exactly sure where your feet are) and aiming the cursor while you're being gouged by two ferocious dinosaurs is one of the most frustrating aspects of the game. I can't tell you how many bullets and arrows were wasted trying to bring down an enemy that was tossing explosives at me from above.

GRAPHICS

The most striking aspect about Turok 2 over its predecessor is the vast improvements made to the graphics engine. The omnipresent fog, while still found here and there, has been pushed out to the point of

SOUND

The sound effects and music in T2 are done with the quality and care that is prevalent throughout the game. The music, while definitely not CD-quality audio, fits the theme and style while not getting too old or grating on the ears. The sound effects, from the various gun retorts, laser blasts and atmospheric sounds, to the gurgling death throes of the various dinos, are a perfect fit and more than just a little cool.

CONCEPT

What can be said about the concept of a first-person shooter? While the first Turok was a bit of a departure from the enclosed, walled-in corridors that were typical a few years back (Doom, Quake, etc.), open environments are quite the norm these days. Shooting enemies, throwing switches, saving little kids and solving the odd-puzzle here and there is always fun, but it's nothing fresh and new. The main drive for wanting to continue on is getting bigger and badder weapons and seeing the carnage they unleash. With the advancements made in the AI and graphics departments, Turok 2 is a worthy sequel but, unlike Goldeneye, I really haven't found any innovation.

SHELF LIFE

While there is a lot of single-player gameplay to be had, the inclusion of a two-to-four player deathmatch mode, with its own set of arenas and levels, a la Goldeneye, really adds that extra bang for your

buck and should keep Turok 2 from gathering too much dust next to games like Midway's Off Road Challenge, Nintendo's Cruisin' the World and THQ's Quest 64. I found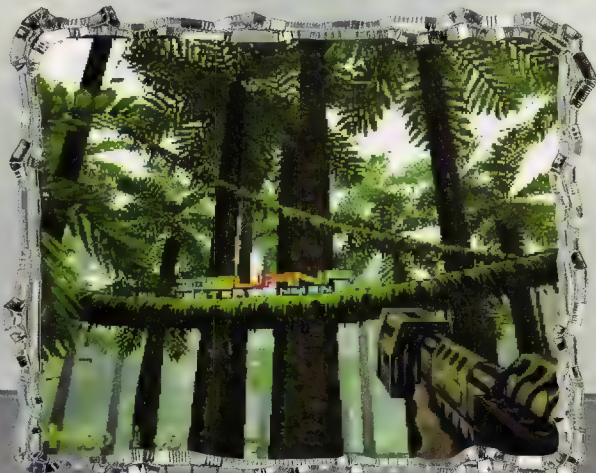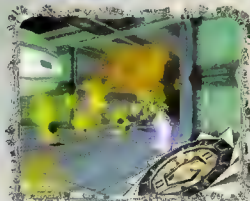 at least a week's worth of casual playing to be had by myself (the game's six levels are HUGE, seemingly going on forever) and, with a few friends, the long-term potential multiplies exponentially.

CONCLUSION

While hyped as being one of THE games to own this holiday season, Turok 2: Seeds of Evil, is almost that good. If it wasn't for the iffy controls, somewhat boring environments and often-uninspired gameplay, T2 would have ranked higher. In any event, it's still a great game — actually one of the better ones coming out this season — and is worth playing and owning, especially if you enjoyed the first. With that said, Turok 2 receives an overall score of 8, giving it an Editor's Seal of Approval, but just missing the 9 mark.

GREG
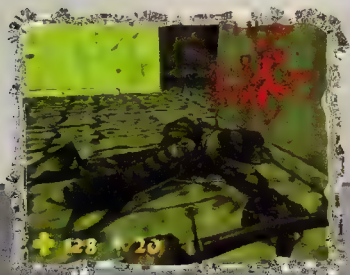
THE 64 SCORE				
GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
7	8	8	7	8

OVERALL SCORE: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10

JUDGEMENT 64

NHL BREAKAWAY 99

"STILL THE KING OF ICE?"

Acclaim has added another NHL game to the N64 with their second effort in the Breakaway Series. Last year's version was an exciting brand of hockey that left this year's version with some big shoes to fill. There are a lot of options that you can try out in Breakaway 99. One of the best is the practice mode, but more on that later. With the addition of NHL 99 by EA Sports, Breakaway is going to have to come up with a huge save in order to keep it's title as the top hockey game for the N64.

GAMEPLAY

NHL Breakaway 99 is a fairly decent game. There really isn't a whole lot of improvement over last year's title, but they must have felt that, with EA Sports adding their popular series to the market of
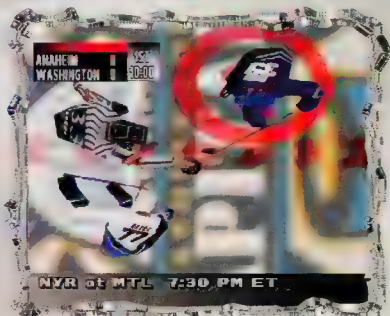
N64 hockey games, they needed to get something into the stores to compete. The modes of play are just like any other hockey title, except for the addition of the practice mode. Having this mode is really great for the beginning gamer. Where the game gets tough is using moves to evade opponents and having the practice mode allows you to practice these moves and to work on your passing. Passing seems to be one of the most difficult things in video games such as soccer and hockey. Sure you can pass, but just how well are you able to do it? Can you thread a needle if you were faced with an opponent trying to smash you into the boards? Well, if you use the practice mode in Breakaway 99, chances are you just might be able to perform under the
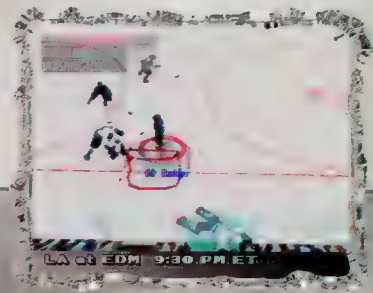
pressure.

As far as the rest of the game goes, you can change the pace of the game in the game options menu. This is another good idea for an intricate game such as hockey. Especially this particular version of hockey. Breakaway seemed a little slow at times, but changing the game speed to fast or faster really helped the game move along. One drawback to speeding up the game was that it directly effected the ability of the players on your screen to react to your commands. What you really want, in a fast-paced game that button accuracy is a big part of, is the ability of the game to react quickly to the pushing of the buttons. The last thing you want is an open shot at the goal to be stopped because, after you pushed the button, a defender steals the puck away from you, and, as he skates away, you shoot an imaginary puck at the goal. Sure your technique looked nice, but a lot of good this does you.

The movement of the players is pretty good. The skating is smooth, but sometimes a bit too smooth. A lot of the turns are rounded off and not executed with the precise movement of a professional hockey player. However, this can easily be overlooked when you realize all of the moves that you can accomplish with a little practice. There are a lot of shake-and-bake moves available for your use to fake out your opponents. Practice makes perfect, so if you are going to give Breakaway a try, you will need to work at it a lot to make it worth having. It just seems that Acclaim could have made things a bit more smooth for those of us at

your team. And, if you don't like the job they are doing, you can fire them!

GRAPHICS

Graphically, there could be some clean up done. There are a lot of smooth and rounded edges which just seem to make the game a little blurry at times. This isn't necessarily bad, but I felt that it could have been done a little better. The rinks are done quite well and look just as real as those found in NHL 99. One of the best aspects of the graphics in Breakaway is how well drawn the players are — there's lots of detail on the uniforms, and the colors are all very crisp.

SOUND

What can I say? The sound is great. Acclaim has done a nice job with music and the sound f/x. The only weak area is the announcing. In this department, Breakaway can't stay with the witty comments that are to be found in NHL 99. The best sounds we heard were the cutting of ice by the blades of skates, the terrific crowd noise and the occasional banging of a body crashing into the boards. All of these f/x are done superbly.

home.

There are some interesting things that Acclaim has put into the game to try to make it seem a bit more realistic. There is the glow puck thing that Fox uses on Fox Hockey Night. There's the point system that awards you a certain number of points based on wins, winning streaks, and other factors. Once you accumulate enough points, you can hire coaches in several different categories to help further strengthen

Breakaway 99 does everything in the sound department well, minus a few points for the limited commentary.

CONCEPT

While the concept of a licensed professional sports title is about as refreshing as a sequel, Acclaim's title qualifies as both. Of course, so do about 90% of the other titles on the market. However, because NHL Breakaway 99 has the point system and the hiring and firing of coaches, it receives more of an edge in this department than other hockey games and, specifically, NHL 99.

SHELF-LIFE

NHL Breakaway 99 has enough gameplay and features to make it through the entire real-life NHL season. Like with most good sports games, you shouldn't find yourself bored to tears after a dozen or so games and, with Breakaway 99, you won't. After all, there are always more points to be earned, coaches to hire and fire, and player trades to be managed. Shoot, Breakaway may even live longer than a Hostess Twinkie (well, maybe not).

CONCLUSION

Acclaim really tries hard to provide a top-notch hockey game for the serious gamer. NHL Breakaway 99 has a lot to offer but, when you look really closely at the game, there almost seems as if there is too much to offer and not enough quality to make it the best hockey game on the N64. There are a lot of great things in Breakaway 99, and there are some bad things as well. The flaws that we found can be overcome and overlooked with a little playing time. We will be looking forward to seeing next year's version come into our office. It should be a lot better. Well at least we can hope so. You might want to rent this one before you make a purchase, it is worth taking a look at. **MARK**
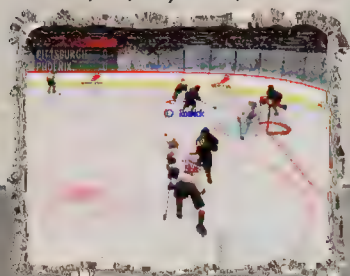
THE 64 SCORE				
GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
8	7	7	7	7

OVERALL SCORE 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10

EA SPORTS'

NHL 99

"IT'S LIKE REALLY REAL"

Now that hockey season has started, it's time that the video game publishers come up with some hockey games for our favorite game system. EA Sports has brought out their first hockey game for the N64, NHL 99. Although it is a new game for the N64, those of us that have been around sports video games for any time at all know that this is not the first hockey game put out by EA. This must be about the 8th or 9th version of the NHL series. For those of you that have played the PlayStation or even the old Genesis versions of the NHL series, you know to expect nothing but the best from the people at EA. For those of you who are new and have never seen one of the NHL games by EA, well let us be the first to tell you to brace yourself and get ready for some of the best

hockey next to the real thing.

GAMEPLAY

Let's drop the puck and play some hockey, shall we? When you first put the game into the console, just realize that you are about to venture into one of the most realistic video sporting experiences, second only to football. Besides the 27 current NHL teams, there are multiple International teams. It was a bit interesting to see an American Hockey team rank higher than most teams on the entire game. The gameplay is as smooth as one can expect for a video game. If it looked or felt any more real than it already does, it would probably be televised on Fox Sports Network. The greatest thing about NHL 99, besides the fact that it looks extremely real, is that it

80 MPH

B **18 KYLE MCLAREN**
1st GOAL
Assisted by Khristain, Allison
3:56

39 JEFF FRIESEN
1st GOAL
Assisted by John Oliver
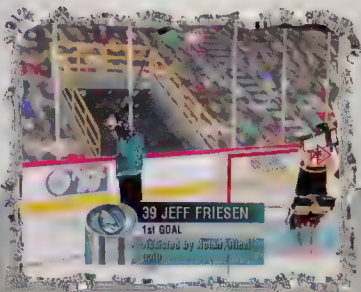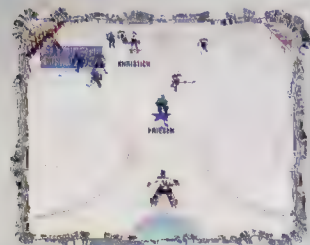
feels real. Every time you move the controller to make your guy do a move, the computer reacts immediately. There is no hesitation between you pushing a button and the man on the screen actually performing the move. How many times in the past have you been playing a sports game on your system and had the puck or the ball taken from, or get by you, because the computer didn't react fast enough to your command? We know how frustrating this can be. Of all the years of gaming and the countless number of games that just don't perform up to standards, it is nice to finally get hold of a game that reacts when you do. The players stop on a dime when you stop them. There isn't much drifting by the
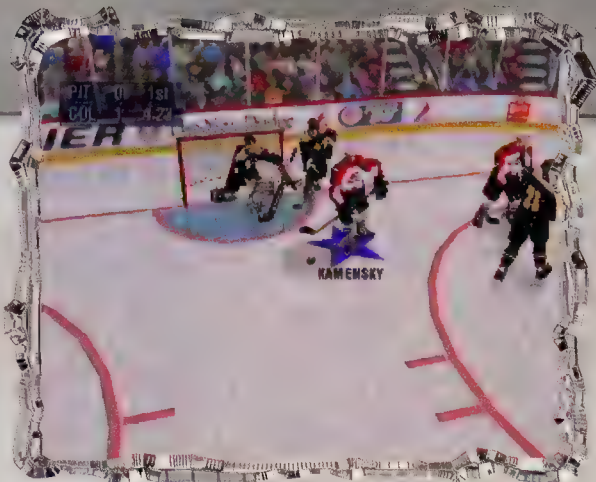
players as you slow them down.

Let's talk about some of the moves. There are so many moves included in NHL 99, your head will spin. Some of the freak moves will leave you dizzy. How about this? You are the Detroit Redwings and you just happen to be in control of Sergei Federov and you happen to have the puck on a breakaway. All of a sudden, a defender gets between you and the goalie at the blue line. What do you do? Well if you

are playing NHL 99, you have numerous possibilities. Let's say you stop on a dime, do a 360 and sprint towards the goalie. Now you have to get the shot off. That seems simple enough, until you see in front of you one of the best goalies in the game in Patrick Roy. Well, I guess you'll just have to decide on a strategy to get the puck past Roy. If it were any other goalie, you might give a little shake move to get him to one side so you can go top shelf on the opposite side

JUDGEMENT 64

the EA series, remember NHL 93 for the Genesis? They took the fighting out. What the heck was that? What is a good hockey game without a fight? As the old saying goes, I went to a fight and a hockey game broke out. Overall, there aren't a whole lot of flaws in the gameplay. There might be some camera angles that aren't very user friendly, but there are great angles, such as the Chase, Classic and the Broadcast angles that get you up close and personal with the game. The only real set-back for the game is that EA hasn't figured out how to get the players names mentioned. When you score a goal, you'll hear the public address guy come on and say "Detroit goal scored by number 91". Oh, you wait and wait, but "Sergei Federov" never comes over the speaker system. This is one area that Acclaim's Breakaway has over EA's NHL.

SOUND

The sound of NHL 99 follows suit with the rest of the game. Real, very real. Especially when you have your home gaming system hooked up to your stereo with surround sound. The banging of flesh and bones into the

for the goal. But, like I mentioned, that's for you to decide.

To add to the realism of NHL 99, the people from EA have added bone crushing body-checks and even the infamous poke-check. Don't get an opposing player angry because, if you do, look out. You might have to throw the gloves on the ice and maybe even pull the other guy's jersey over his head and start pummeling his face in. For those of you that have been loyal to
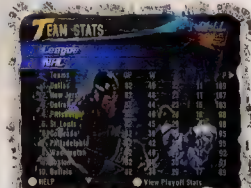
plexiglas; BOOM what a big sound! If you have ever been to a hockey game and heard this sound, you will recognize it while playing NHL 99. The stick can be heard as it slaps the puck around the ice. How about the sound of the goalie's best friend, the goal post, knocking the puck away. PING! One Question: "Is it Live?"

CONCEPT

As far as being original, EA has done nothing that they have not done in the past. However, this is their first effort for the N64. With a limited amount of hockey available for the system, EA Sports NHL 99 is going to monopolize the market. Even if there were lots of hockey titles out there, EA would still dominate the market. The concept here is great hockey and is that EA has done a superb job.

SHELF-LIFE

Let's see, there are less than a handful of good hockey titles out for the N64. EA Sports' NHL 99 is the best hockey title for the N64. Two plus two is four. If you do the math, you will see that, as long as EA doesn't make another game in the NHL series until next year, or another publisher doesn't come up
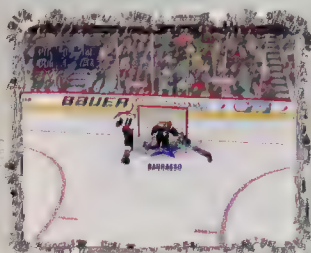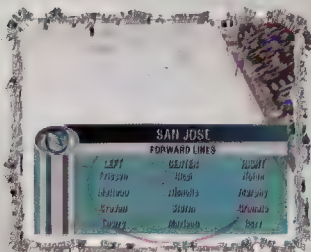
with a miracle, NHL 99 is going to have a very long shelf life. Let's put it this way: at the finish line, it's the pink rabbit by a nose.

CONCLUSION

Overall, EA Sports' NHL 99 for the N64 is by far the best hockey game available for the system. The game just seems to have everything you could ever want in a hockey game. The only exception is that the names of the players are not announced over the loud speaker. This was a bit disappointing but, if that is the biggest flaw in the game, you will be 100% satisfied with your purchase. Yes, we said purchase. This is one that you can skip going to Blockbuster to rent — Just buy it! Hands down the best hockey game in town.

SCOTT

THE 64 SCORE				
GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
9	9	8	7	8

OVERALL SCORE: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10

JUDGEMENT 64

SILICON VALLEY

DARWINISM COMES TO DEEP SPACE NINE
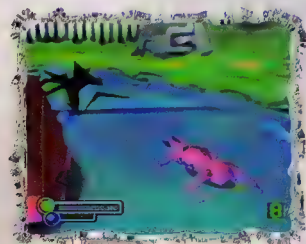
In the year 2001, Space Station Silicon Valley was created as a sort of galactic Jurassic Park — mankind's first attempt at creating self-replicating, evolving, intelligent machines. It vanished seven minutes after launch, only to return in the year 30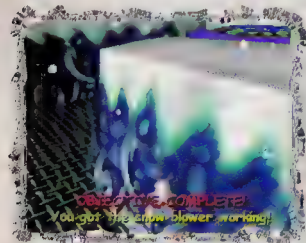00. Why? Well, if it didn't, there wouldn't be a game about it, would there? The space station is now on a collision course with Earth, and you are the most affordable hero the world has to offer. Actually, you are the expendable robot sidekick of the most affordable hero the world has to offer.

In a humorous and attention-getting intro, the spaceship piloted by our hero Dan Danger and his robot EVO ends up crashing into the space station. Dan, wearing his seatbelt, survives unscathed. EVO is not so lucky — he is thrown out of the craft and smashed into tiny pieces. Fortunately, one of those tiny pieces — EVO's memory chip — survives and transfers itself into the body of a deactivated dog lying nearby. As EVO's chip, you've got to explore the strange new world of the
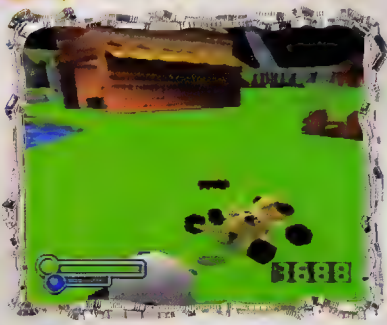
space station, seek out new animal life, and deactivate it. Boldly going where no chip has gone before, you'll need to transfer yourself from animal to animal in order to overcome obstacles and solve puzzles. There are over 40 animals to take control over, and all of them exhibit animal-like behavior towards one another and their environments.

GAMEPLAY

Space Station Silicon Valley is a 3D exploration game. With the analog stick, you control the animal which EVO's chip happens to be in at the time. Changing animals is as easy as hitting the L button. The camera, which floats behind you, can be zoomed in and out and rotated with the yellow C buttons. A first-person camera view is available by holding the Z button, but it is used to momentarily examine your surroundings rather than to explore. Meters at the bottom of the screen show your energy level, the energy level of your opponent, and the power available for your abilities (if applicable).
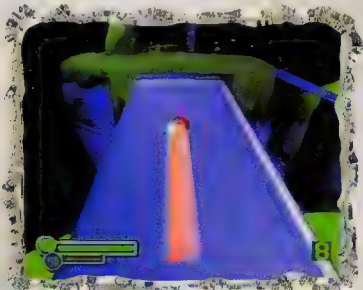
The two action buttons have different effects for each animal you control. On some animals they may activate a turbo; on others they may fire a projectile. You can obtain information by accessing any of the computer screens located in the station's levels, and when you enter a new animal for the first time, the information is also displayed. Not only do the action buttons vary with each creature, but the animals also have different speeds, weight, armor, strength, water resistance, and fall distance. It is important to memorize the various characteristics since they are not always obvious. For example, the mouse will short out if it is in the water too long — you had better use another animal if you are planning an extended swim.

There are four different environments: Euro Eden, Arctic Kingdom, Jungle Safari, and Desert
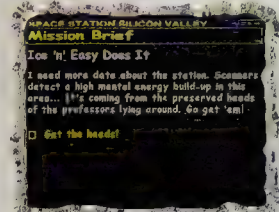
Adventure. You don't have to complete all the zones in each environment in order to move on to the next one. After three zones in each area have been completed, you may jump back and forth between the zones. You can also revisit completed
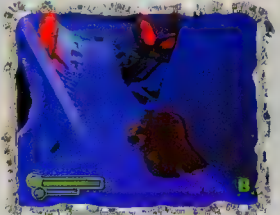
zones if you have failed to find the hidden trophy or missed some of the power cells. Each environment is filled with animals native to that climate — penguins and walruses in the arctic, hyenas, hippos and piranhas in the jungle, and so forth. Prior to each mission you'll receive a brief from Dan telling you what you are supposed to accomplish, and an on-screen message lets you know when your tasks have been completed. Most of the required tasks involve simple button pushing or puzzle solving, but they do vary from level to level.

GRAPHICS

TELEPORTER ACTIVE!

Use the R Button to transfer Evo into a deactivated animal.

SOUND

There are different tunes for each of the levels, but all could be described as light jazz. This is definitely a welcome change from all the techno soundtracks out there. Although repetitive, as you would expect from a cartridge, the music is not intrusive. In fact, as compared to other games of this type, it is relatively low-key. The game's music actually emanates from pulsating speakers that are strewn about the levels, getting louder the closer you get to the speakers. The effect is not unlike that of a miniature golf course. While the music is good, it is the sound effects that make the game. Every animal has its own sounds, the environments are alive with sounds, and the actions you perform result in comic sound effects. Sheep have tiny feet that "pitter patter" on metal decking, for example, and the dog yelps when it runs into something. The death... err... "deactivation" squeals of the various animals are pretty pitiful, however.

CONCEPT

While it is true that Space Station Silicon Valley is yet another 3D exploration game, the hook here is the ability to become different animals in order to solve the puzzles. The game also differs from its competition in that the puzzles themselves don't seem repetitive with each new level. In one mission you might be required to turn on a machine or turn off a fence, in another you might be required to do an aerial bombing run on gun batteries.

There is little or no fog — except for the jungle level where it is used for effect. The background graphics are colorful, albeit with that normal N64 "fuzzy" look. The storyline allows for a combination of zoological designs with science fiction elements, resulting in a unique look to the game. All the animals are also wonderfully animated for maximum comic effect. From the waddling penguin who uses an umbrella to slow his fall, to a lumbering bear who froths at the mouth when agitated, the character designs will have you laughing out loud.

It's a moose!

While the concept of becoming multiple characters with different abilities in order to solve puzzles is as old as the Infocom text-adventure Suspended, or perhaps older, it really hasn't been utilized much in the modern era. As a result, Silicon Valley seems fresh and innovative.

SHELF LIFE

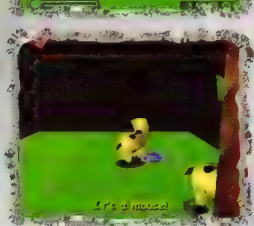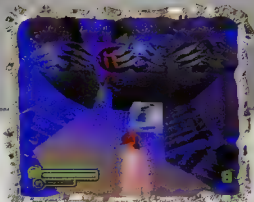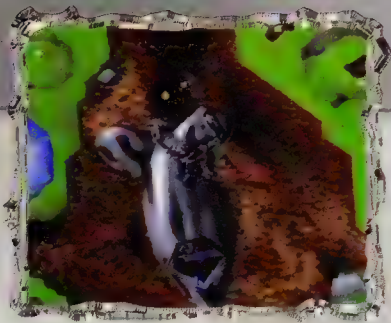Silicon Valley features 25 or so levels. None of them are very large, but the challenges in each vary in difficulty so you will have to spend a lot of time to complete the game. It will definitely be worth your while to make it to the end — the final stage is a "King Kong-esque" battle against hoards of animals in a miniaturized New York that has to be seen to be believed. There is some added replay value in trying to obtain souvenirs in each level — which are rewarded for completing special tasks — destroying all the computers, killing all the fish, winning a foot race, etc. On the other hand, since there is no clear pattern for finding them, not everyone will have the patience to continue looking. Still, overall, I think the game has the same or slightly higher replay value as the average N64 title.

CONCLUSION

Space Station Silicon Valley is a very enjoyable experience. The only complaints I have concern the occasionally awkward camera positioning and the fact that the difficulty of the game is uneven.
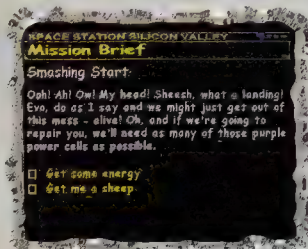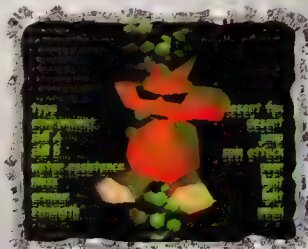
Not all of the early levels in each zone start simple and get harder as you progress through the game — there are some frustratingly difficult challenges right away.

Parents of very young children or animal rights extremists may balk at the Darwinistic concept of animals "killing" each other, but it is clear that the animals here are robots — there is no blood and guts of any kind. In fact, despite the fact that the prone bodies of animals end up littering the landscape in many levels, the cartoon violence here does not seem objectionable. Despite its cartoon look, Space Station Silicon Valley requires a great amount of skill and some strategy to complete many of the tasks — more so than the usual 3D exploration game. Adults will therefore enjoy this title as much or more than their kids will. If you are looking for a game that is out of the ordinary, fun to play, reasonably challenging, and loaded with humor, Space Station Silicon Valley should be your destination.

MARK
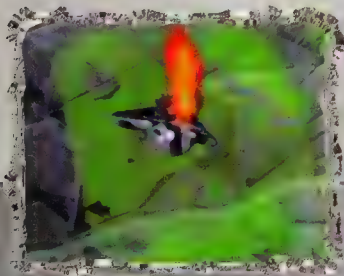
THE 64 SCORE				
GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
8	8	8	8	8

OVERALL SCORE 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10

UBISOFT'S
S.C.A.R.S.

UBER-COMBAT

Ubi Soft looks to be joining Midway and Acclaim as one of the most prolific third party developers for the Nintendo 64. By the end of the first quarter of 1999 (March), Ubi Soft will have released the following games; Buck Bumble, Tonic Trouble, Rayman 2, their F1 racing game, and the subject of this review, S.C.A.R.S. S.C.A.R.S. stands for Super Computer Animal Racing, and the title brings to mind Saturday morning cartoons and toy tie-ins. Who knows? We may yet see some S.C.A.R.S. vehicles on the store shelves or an animated series in the near future. But, in the meantime, what about the game? Is it yet another Wipeout clone using a clever acronym to hide mediocre gameplay? Or is it an enjoyable contest in its own right that just happens to have an odd name? I'm happy to say it's the latter.

GAMEPLAY

There are a total of nine animal vehicles to choose from, only five of which are unlocked at the beginning. These include a lion, mammoth, rhino, shark, mantis, scorpion, cobra, cheetah, and panther. The cars look only vaguely like animals actually, and they don't "morph" into beasts or anything cool like that. Too bad! They differ from one another in both physical appearance and in five main attributes — acceleration, speed, grip, armor, and weapon. Basically, each vehicle's attributes are supposed to reflect its animal namesake — the mammoth has a lot of armor but is slow, the lion is fast and moderately armored, the shark is faster with a more powerful weapon, etc. Unfortunately, even the vehicles with the strongest grip feel like they are sliding across the tracks most of the time. The game sure could use a little bit more traction.

There are four difficulty levels to choose from, and you can change the speed and the number of laps in your race, as well as enabling a "catch up" handicap feature. For racing purists, you can also turn the weapons on and off. Three camera views catch the action and can be toggled back and forth during the game. The racing surfaces are not flat and boring — there are many hills and valleys (perfect for giving your rumble pack a good workout) and different surfaces to race upon. Many tracks have shortcuts in them as well. Along with time trials, where you get to race the ghost of your best lap time, there are cup races which unlock the extra vehicles and tracks. You can also organize your own cup by choosing the tracks you want to compete on. During the race, you can carry two of eight different weapons which can be powered up and launched forwards, as well as backwards. Weapons include boomerangs, magnet traps, missiles, homing missiles, a blockade, and what can best be described as a "hot potato" that you pass back and forth to the nearest car until it detonates. Very cool! Most weapons can also be used to clear your path of any traps or blockades.

The AI in S.C.A.R.S. changes with your level of skill, which means that the better you are doing, the harder the game becomes. While some players might like such a challenge, I prefer a game with a set level of difficulty which does not fluctuate. It just feels like the game is cheating when you can lead a race for 2 out

tracks are very nicely done with neat headlight effects. There is still a little bit of the standard Nintendo "fog" to mask pop up but it is not as noticeable as in other games. The colors are a lot brighter than the usual fuzzy look. Many courses feature moving objects as part of the landscape rather than normal static backgrounds, although some of those details are necessarily lost to maintain speed in the four-player mode.

SOUND

The Achilles heel of the N64, the sound in S.C.A.R.S., is nevertheless decent. The engines roar realistically, and each vehicle has its own sound when it gets hit or scores a hit. The soundtrack is a standard racing game blend of techno/rock, but even though it is repetitive, it is never overwhelming.

CONCEPT

I can't say that S.C.A.R.S. is very original- it is a basic racing/combat game. At its core, the game is interchangeable with Wipeout, Mario Kart, or Motor Toon Grand Prix. Although the cars are patterned after animals, they are essentially just funny-looking vehicles with different attributes and the tracks don't have anything to do
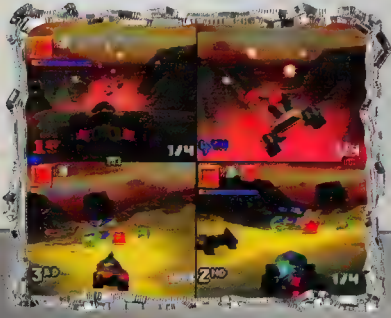
of 3 laps and then get hit right before the finish line.

GRAPHICS

The graphics are truly impressive. Although at first the tracks appear to be generated randomly by computer, they never actually change in appearance. Races are run in locales such as a ski run, an island and a canyon and each course can be played in one of four different weather conditions. Although the rain drops do not look very convincing, the night

with the animal's habitat. The "hot potato" weapon is something I've never seen before, but the rest of the weapons are pretty standard. Even though the tracks are stereotypical environments such as a desert, mountain, and snow, they still manage to look fresh thanks to a judicious use of color and background elements.

SHELF LIFE

The game features Grand Prix mode, which can be played by one to four players and, although there is no practice mode, there is a Time Trial mode where you can race your "ghost." It will take some time to unlock the extra courses and vehicles, even on the normal difficulty. You also have the option of racing every course in one of four different weather patterns, and since the weather actually affects the look and feel of the game, it is almost like having 36 courses to race. The battle mode is not as addictive as Mario Kart 64, but it is still a blast to play. While Grand Prix, Time Trial, and Battle modes are pretty much standard for racing games nowadays, the numerous difficulty options, various weather patterns, and strong computer AI make S.C.A.R.S.' shelf life a little bit better than average.
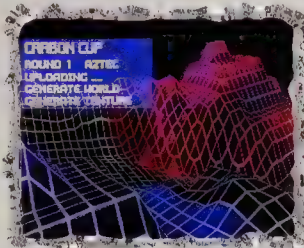
CONCLUSIONS

While it doesn't break any new ground in terms of gameplay, S.C.A.R.S. is one of the best-looking N64 games currently on the market. It is fast-paced, challenging, and fun. Unfortunately, S.C.A.R.S.' reign as king of the racing/combat jungle may be cut short as Wipeout 64 will be arriving soon. Still, if you're a fan of the genre, or dislike the futuristic style of Wipeout's anti-gravity vehicles, S.C.A.R.S. is for you.

MARK

THE 64 SCORE				
GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
8	9	7	7	8

| OVERALL SCORE	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10

JUDGEMENT 64

VIRTUAL POOL 64

RACK 'EM!

There comes a time in a console's life when the blockbuster games needed to launch the system give way to a multitude of specialized titles intended to expand the library. I refer to this as the "pool point," because a billiards game is usually one of the first to appear — followed soon afterwards by bowling and fishing. With the release of Virtual Pool 64, the N64 has now reached the "pool point." Not that there's anything wrong with that — it is actually a good sign when companies see that there is a market for titles other than the regular genre staples. So forget about Zelda and Turok 2, all you indoor sports fans — it's time to stop talking and start chalking!

GAMEPLAY

Before playing, you can name up to 9 different players whose statistics can later be saved. Records of wins and losses, player ratings, and incomplete games have to be saved on a controller pack rather than on the cartridge itself, which is a shame. After choosing your player or players, you can select from 9 different games — 8 ball, 9 ball, 3 ball, 6 ball, 10 ball, straight pool, rotation, one pocket, or bank pool. The latter five variations cannot be played against the CPU, only yourself or another human player. You then get to select from a match, tournament, free style, or shark skins option. A match is a quick number of games you select against a single CPU opponent. A tournament can be played against as many as sixteen CPU opponents, although you only have to face four to win. Both matches and tournament losses and victories affect your player's overall statistics and ratings (which start at 1000 for each variation). Free style mode
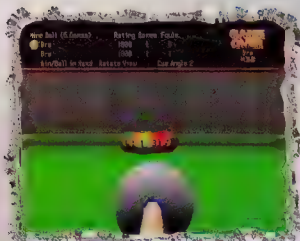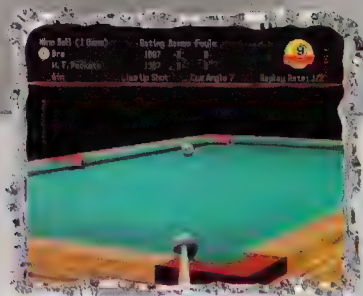
allows you to play just for fun — setting up the table as you prefer, replaying shots, etc. The shark skins game is a contest to score the lowest number of points at 3-ball, 6-ball, and 9-ball, with each shot counting as a point and a scratch counting as two points against you. There are a variety of controls to allow you to change the cue placement and cue angle to add English to the ball. The camera can be zoomed in and out at all times, even when the CPU is playing, and you can also select from an overhead view. Guidelines can be turned on and off to show the projected trajectory of the cue and object balls. The analog stick is used in pinball plunger fashion to strike the cue ball. The further back you pull the stick and the faster you push it forward, the harder the shot. Moving it forward slowly
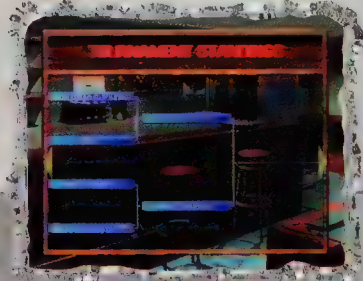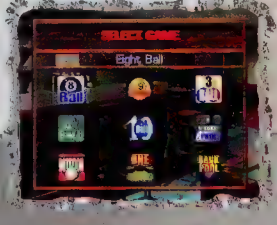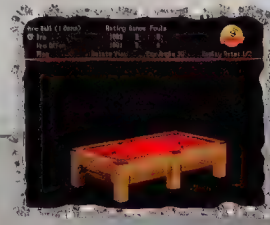

just taps the ball. It isn't the easiest of motions to perform with your left thumb. While you will eventually get the hang of most shots, it remains difficult to hit the ball hard enough to get a good break needed to start a game. I would have preferred the option to use some sort of power meter with one button press, instead. If you are a normal human being and only know the rules to 8-ball and 9-ball, fear not. In-game help can be selected from the menu to talk you through the different game variations. There is no

tutorial per se, although you can use the free style mode to practice your shots.

Finally, although it is not labeled as such, there is a trick shot mode. From the free style menu, you can select nearly 100 different set ups to try. This option should have been more prominently advertised, as it adds to the depth of the game.
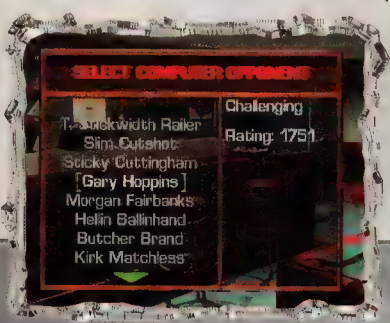
GRAPHICS

You won't find any fuzzy graphics or fog to hide "pop up" in this game, as the action takes place

SOUND

As you might expect, there aren't a lot of sounds involved either. I can't criticize the game very much in this area, since the game adequately portrays what few sounds there are — the clacking of balls hitting each other, the soft thump against the rail, and the thud as a ball drops into a pocket. I suppose the designers might have included the noise of breaking glass as your cue shatters the Budweiser light above the table, the crunch of drywall as you make a nice round hole, the sound of beer mugs clinking, or the coughing sounds of patrons choking on cigarette smoke. But do we really want to get that realistic? As far as music is concerned, there are two soundtracks to choose from-"pop" and "alternative." The "pop" is jazzy soft rock straight out of an elevator. The "alternative" is not really alternative rock, as I was expecting it to be. I guess it is just an alternative to the other music — sort of hip hop with lots of bass. Neither are memorable, but the "pop" setting is less irritating. Where is the traditional rock and roll?

CONCEPT

It's kind of silly if you think about it — hitting little balls into pockets with a stick.
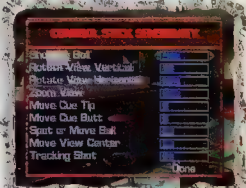
inside a single room. The billiard balls are all rendered nicely with the appropriate shadows and light reflections. They disappear rather than drop into the pockets, however. You can select from four different table felt colors-red, cyan, tan, or the traditional green — and there are three backgrounds to choose from. The backgrounds are pretty boring, however, but you can always turn them off. There aren't a lot of other graphics in the game, but what there is looks fine.

Of course, just about every sport sounds silly when you describe it. Virtual Pool 64 gives you what you would expect — a solid game of pool. However, they could have added extras such as a training mode or RPG elements. Still, that mainly affects the shelf life. There is nothing unique about the concept, but there doesn't need to be.
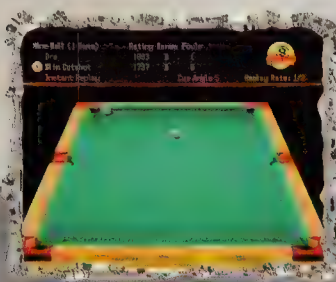
SHELF LIFE

All sports video games have a shelf life that is better than average because the game is different every time you play. With all the variables involved in pool — the cue position, the strength of the shot, the angles, the trajectory of the balls — you can be sure that you'll never play the same game twice. Still, this doesn't mean that there isn't room for improvement. VR Pool 64 has 9 different pool variations, but only 5 can be played against the CPU. It also lacks games such as 14-1, bowlliards, four ball, and three cushion. This is partially alleviated by the free style mode that lets you set up the table to your preference, but you have to keep score on your own. With the N64's four controller ports, I expected to be able to play cutthroat and 5-9. Unfortunately, there are no games for more than two players.

Granted, the average video game player who isn't a pool aficionado may not care about some of the more obscure games, but how hard would it have been to include them? Thankfully, the extensive trick shot selection results in a longer than average shelf life.

CONCLUSION

Virtual Pool 64 isn't the best pool video game I've ever played, but it is a very good contest. The physics are accurate, the graphics are fine, the sounds and music are okay, and the selection of games is reasonable. The computer opponents can be as challenging or as easy as you want them to be, but I think it is more fun to go up against a human player. If you're in the mood to rack 'em up, you won't be disappointed.
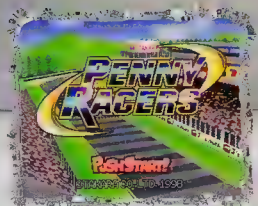
MARK

THE 64 SCORE				
GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
8	8	7	6	7

OVERALL SCORE	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10

JUDGEMENT 64

# PENNY RACERS

IT'S LIKE MARIO KART, ONLY CHEAPER.

Do you remember putting pennies in the back of those little wind-up cars? Well, I don't either. I know what "penny racers" are, but I played with Hot Wheels instead. In any case, THQ has brought these tiny cars home in a new racing game. If you are expecting something similar to Micro Machines, however, you may be a little disappointed. Although the cars look like toys, the tracks they race on are typical racing environments. The game is essentially a Mario Kart clone, but does the N64 really need another cartoon racer? Let's take a look.

GAMEPLAY

Penny Racers gives you nine different tracks to choose from, although you can create your own (more on that later). The locales have become stereotypical for racing games of this type and include a lakeside, a mountain, alpine, and country courses. The weather patterns and difficulty level vary with each course but cannot be changed. Most courses feature sharp-angled turns which can be negotiated with a power sliding move. Turbo boots are located off the side of the track at various intervals, but the loss in speed from running off the road to hit one negates any extra speed you might have gained from the boost.

There are 13 different car bodies to choose from, including trucks and sports cars, but the body is only for show and has no effect on the vehicle's performance. In other words, your garbage truck can overtake your opponent's Trans Am. In order to obtain new parts, you must place third or better in a race. You will then be able to take a part from one of the vehicles you have beaten. No specifications are given for the parts, however, so the only way to
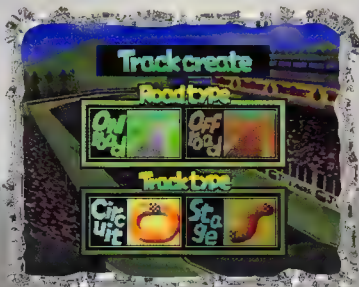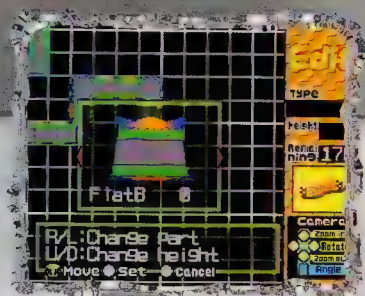
learn what they do is to race with them. Frankly, I didn't notice much of a difference between the parts except for the special weapons.

There are three race modes-time trial, versus, and series. Best laps, overall times, and car upgrades can be saved to a memory card. As mentioned earlier, there is a track editor which allows you to create and save your own custom raceways. Although you can choose from a variety of track "pieces," with different elevations and obstacles, the background graphics of your custom courses cannot be changed. In addition, no CPU cars are able to challenge you on custom tracks. So, why bother?

The first thing you'll notice is that the game

is s-l-o-w. It isn't that the frame rate is slow, it is just that the game never conveys a feeling of speed. It takes forever to accelerate, and even at top speed you half expect someone on a skateboard to pass you by.

While the lack of speed might have been overlooked with some fast and furious fighting between the vehicles, the combat in this game leaves a lot to be desired. Many of the so-called "weapons" leave you in worse shape than your opponents, and almost all of them are defensive rather than offensive. When you are in the lead, you can drop objects behind you, but there is no rear view to see who is on your tail. Unfortunately, you start each game at the back of the pack with no way of taking out any cars ahead of you. Your weapons are replenished after every lap, but
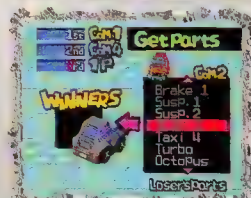
style, but they lack personality. The ever-present fog is here, and the backgrounds have that common N64 "blurry" look to them. Nothing really stands out at all. There are a few interactive elements-falling boulders, items flowing downstream — but nothing we haven't seen before. Penny Racers is also subject to some annoying clipping problems, allowing you to see through mountains and buildings which should obscure your view.

SOUND

The mindless looping music sounds like the soundtrack for a forgettable16-bit puzzle game. There aren't any catchy tunes. As for sound effects, there are a few environmental sounds, such as the roar of a waterfall, but nothing spectacular. The engines themselves sound rather weak, and the weapons whimper rather than bang. You know there's a problem when the flapping sound of the flag on the title screen is the best sound effect in the game. It's as if the programmers intentionally decided to keep things quiet.

CONCEPT

The underlying racing game concept is nothing new, of course, and the projectile-shooting aspect of the game will be all too

there are no power ups to be obtained during the race itself. Bumping into another car will send you flying uncontrollably, and it is nearly impossible to avoid being bumped from behind yourself. Your car will also be affected if it is in the vicinity of a weapon explosion between other cars. As a result of getting bounced around, it feels like luck, rather than skill, is responsible for the outcome of the race.

GRAPHICS

The racers are intentionally drawn in a cartoon

familiar for those who have played Mario Kart 64 and Diddy Kong Racing. In fact, many of the track themes seem as if they have been lifted straight from those other games. The problem with Penny Racers is that it doesn't have much of a "hook" to make it stand out from the crowd. With Mario Kart 64 you have the familiar Nintendo characters, graphically interesting course designs, good music, and an excellent battle mode. With Diddy Kong Racing, you have the ability to change vehicles and exploration aspects. Penny Racers doesn't have any of those elements, but it adds two new options — the ability to take parts from cars you have beaten and the ability to create your own tracks. While unique, neither of these adds much to the overall game.

SHELF LIFE

Penny Racers only has a moderate number of tracks to race, and once you've exhausted the time trial and racing circuit modes, there aren't many reasons to come back. Sure, you can try to earn more parts for your car, but eventually you will be fully equipped. Had the game included a four-player battle mode, rather than the simpler four-player race mode, the shelf-life would have been greatly extended. As it is, the replay value is only average.

CONCLUSION

When a game closely mimics the look and feel of a prior game, especially a popular one, comparisons are inevitable. After all, if a game is just a clone of someone else's good idea, it may not be deserving of your hard-earned money. In this case, Penny Racers attempts to replicate Mario Kart 64. Unfortunately, without many of the features that made Mario Kart 64 enjoyable, and with few new options, it just cannot compete. If you don't already own a cartoon-style cart racer, or you find Mario Kart 64 to be too difficult, you might want to take a look at Penny Racers. It isn't that bad of a game, but it is hardly the best example of the genre.

MARK

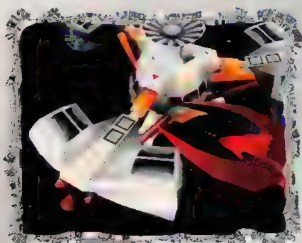| THE 64 SCORE				
GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
6	7	5	5	7

OVERALL SCORE 0 1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10

MIDWAY'S
BODY HARVEST

"BLAST CORPS MEETS BODY SNATCHERS"

Some games start out with spectacular graphics and promising gameplay but quickly fall short of your expectations. Other games start out slow but get better the longer you play them. Body Harvest is in the latter category. Only after you've spent several hours with it will you realize how impressive this game really is.

The story is straight out of a 1950's B-movie. An alien race has enslaved mankind in the future in order to process us for food ("It's a cookbook!"). With the aid of a time travel vehicle, you head back to various time periods to stop the aliens from gaining a foothold. Not only do you use a number of weapons to destroy the aliens and protect humans from being "processed," you also have the ability to commandeer vehicles such as motorcycles, tanks, boats and airplanes. In order to progress through the various time periods — Greece 1916, Java 1941, America 1966 (a good year), and Siberia 1991

— you have to solve puzzles and get information by speaking with the inhabitants. Eventually, you'll have a showdown with the alien boss.

GAMEPLAY
The camera provides a view of the action from a third-person perspective which can be adjusted as needed. The best praise I can give for the camera is that, until I wrote this sentence, I hadn't thought about it. Unlike many 3D exploration games, Body Harvest's camera does not obscure the action or get stuck in strange positions. When you enter a building, the camera changes to a closer view that reminds me of the original Zelda — power-ups, ammo, and keys can be found, lights can be turned on, and treasure chests and furniture can be searched. Weapons cannot be used inside buildings, but there are no enemies inside. (This doesn't explain why there are so
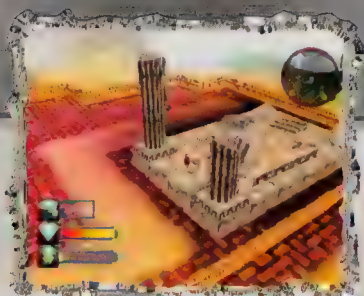
many dead bodies lying around. Who killed them?)

You cannot jump, but you can swim (for a short period) and roll by using the left and right C buttons in connection with the Z trigger. Exiting and entering vehicles is achieved by pushing the down C button. Although your weapon automatically targets the nearest alien, you can also manually target them with the R button. In a rare use of the N64's directional cross pad, you can change weapons by pushing down. There is a good reason that most games don't utilize this pad — you can't reach it while keeping your other hands where you need them. As you might expect, there is a slight learning curve to the controls since they cannot be configured to your liking. Throughout the game, you will run into people inside buildings who you can converse
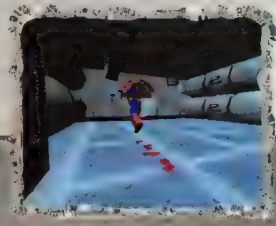

with. You will also run into (or should I say "over") people outside, but this is not a good thing. The people you meet may give you hints or provide you with needed items. Of all the various elements of the game, the RPG aspects are the weakest. However, since the game is being touted as an action/adventure and not a role-playing game, few players will be disappointed.

GRAPHICS

The opening cinema loses some suspense due to the bright colors and simple textures which seem out of place for a serious and dramatic game. While Body Harvest's graphics are not as "cartoonish" as Mario 64, they aren't quite as realistic as Goldeneye. There are a lot of similar environmental textures. Although there are a few unique locales in each time period, the buildings, rocks, and trees tend to look the same no matter where you go. The humans wandering around the landscape also look similar in each time period and have a tendency to blend into the backgrounds. The graphics of the building interiors, which are filled
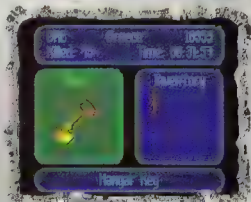
slowdown when there are a lot of explosions and aliens on the screen, but fortunately this doesn't detract from the game. The game looks fine overall — the gameplay makes up for the sometimes uninteresting graphics.
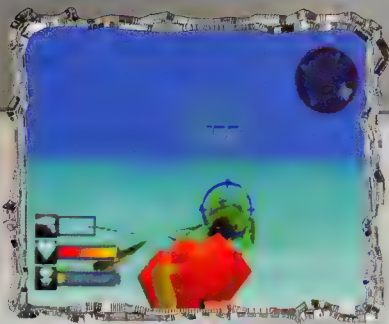
SOUND

The soundtrack would be at home in a horror/suspense movie. The score rises appropriately in volume and tempo when the aliens attack and settles back down when the threat is over. None of the characters talk, but vehicles roar and sputter and aliens screech. Environmental sounds such as wind, rain, and water draw you into the game. There is one odd sound — investigating skeletal remains results in a laugh which is more humorous than scary. Nevertheless, the soundtrack and sound effects certainly set the appropriate mood and are quite impressive for a cartridge.

CONCEPT

Body Harvest is a unique blend of seven herbs and spices… no wait… that's the Colonel's recipe. Body Harvest blends several existing genres together — free-roaming exploration, driving and flying, shooting, and puzzle solving. None are truly original in and of themselves. Blast Corps featured similar play mechanics in that you had to run around a landscape acquiring various vehicles to

with furniture, windows, fireplaces and lights, are much more detailed than the outside. One of the coolest things I've seen in awhile is watching your vehicle slide down a mountain and into the river, and you get to stand there and watch it sink! The assorted aliens and vehicles are well-drawn and there are nice touches, such as smoke or steam. The blood is a little too much, but the explosions are about as nice as they come.

As with most 3D exploration games on the N64, there is a lot of fog present. There is some

complete tasks. However, Body Harvest greatly expands upon that concept to include more combat, RPG-like conversations, and more complex puzzles. So, while it isn't entirely unique, it is different enough from prior games to warrant an above-average rating in this category.

SHELF LIFE

This is quite hard to determine. On the one hand, the game is HUGE! It takes a serious amount of time to progress through the levels — Greece , Java, America, and Siberia — before meeting the final Boss. Many times, you have to retrace your steps or take alternate routes though the landscape to find your way to your objective. If your vehicle is destroyed, you may have to walk great distances on foot until you can find a replacement. I got worn out just watching my character walk around! The game will definitely require some serious playing time. On the other hand, once you have finally reached the end of a level there may not be much of an incentive to return. The game does allow you to replay each level you have completed in order to find artifacts that you might have missed. However, since each level has a map and the important progress points are noted, you probably won't miss much the first time.

CONCLUSION
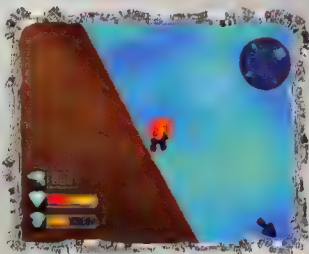
Body Harvest is a paradox in that it is both one of the easiest and one of the hardest games I've ever played. It is easy because the computer tells you where to go, health power-ups and vehicles are plentiful, and weapons automatically target the nearest alien. At the same time, it is hard because you can only save your game after the lengthy process of defeating a boss. It can also be easy to get lost in the massive worlds, and then have your "dead human" meter increase while you wander about. Since this meter never decreases, you may have to replay levels and save more inhabitants so that some clueless human won't end your game by walking in front of your tank. For two years I have been waiting for the N64 equivalent of a Tomb Raider — a game which is interesting to adults, immense in scope, and challenging in execution. The wait is over. Body Harvest is an excellent game. **MARK**
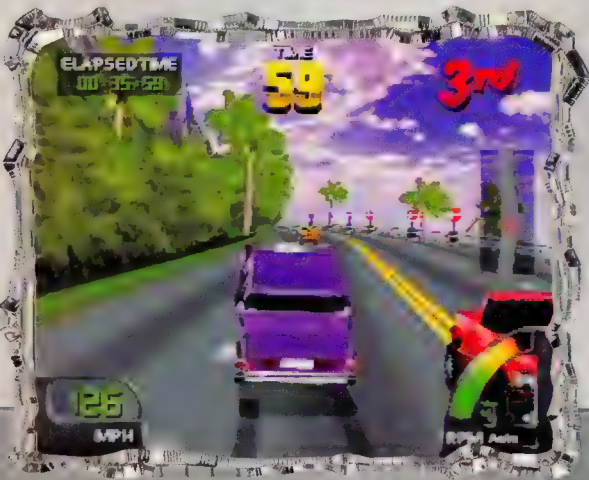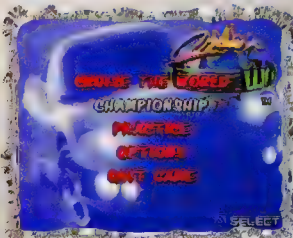
THE 64 SCORE				
GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
9	7	8	8	8

OVERALL SCORE 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

JUDGEMENT 64

CRUSI'N THE WORLD

A SEQUEL STUCK IN CRUISE CONTROL

The long awaited sequel to Cruis'n USA is finally on store shelves (at least by the time you read this anyway) in the form of Cruis'n the World. Like most Midway titles, CtW has an arcade heritage that has built quite a following begining with the original Cruis'n title. Cruis'n USA was, without a doubt, one of the best arcade racing games of the past few years. The home version for the N64, while a retail success, was disapointng to say the least. As one of the most anticipated launch titles for the staff here at Q64, Cruis'n USA left us feeling like we were duped. After spending some quality time with the arcade version of CtW, we began to get our hopes up once again for the possibilities of a quality home version.

GAMEPLAY

Much like the original, Cruis'n the World is set up around various locations throughout the world where you get to blast through the country side at break neck speeds, with special short cuts as you progress from one site to the next. The big difference with CtW is the addition of some special moves the cars can do and, of course, different locations. Specifically, you'll get to

race in France, Italy, Egypt, Moscow, The Great Wall of China, Mexico, Australia and New York, with a total of fourteen tracks in all.

If you played Cruis'n USA, you'll undoubtedly remember the sloppy control and the less than stellar graphics, especially for a 64-bit machine. Thankfully, these are the two biggest improvements with the sequel. The control is extremely tight, you'll have no trouble controlling your vehicle in any driving condition, including on two wheels. One of the enhancements made to the gameplay is the addition of turbo's, quick starts, flips and driving on two wheels. They may just sound like cosmetic improvements at first, but they become part of the overall strategy if you're going to beat the game. Flipping onto another car will knock him out of the way and the extended turbo boosts can keep you ahead of the pack and give you the ability to burst through various short cuts. When all is said and done, the gameplay in Cruis'n the World is what will set it apart from the original. While not up to the standards set by San Francisco Rush, it's still a marked improvement.

GRAPHICS

Having learned their lesson from Cruis'n USA, Midway/Nintendo enlisted the help of European developer, Eurocom (War Gods, Hercules) to help make the transition to the home console. This move has definately paid off, as the visuals have made a quantum leap forward. Gone are the fuzzy backgrounds and indistinguishable cars found in the original and what has replaced them are crystal clear driving enviroments and meticulously drawn vehicles. With the exception of Egypt and Australia, the rest of the tracks all have a fair amount of detail and enough visual points of interest to keep your attention for extended periods at the controls. Overall, the graphics package is a vast improvement over the "USA" version and a decent warm up to its bigger, badder arcade cousin; San Francisco Rush 2.

SOUND

Discussing the sound in an arcade conversion is usually a short conversation, especially on a cartridge based game. However,
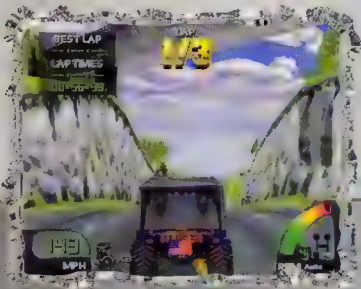
Cruis'n the World actually does a pretty good job of keeping the flavor and tempo of the orginal arcade version by mixing menacing engine noises and very up tempo tunes with a nice variety. Nothing really special here, but the sound track does do a decent job of enhancing the gameplay.

CONCEPT

As with the sound, arcade racing games aren't exactly "high concept". When Cruis'n USA came out in the arcades, it put a fresh face on the genre but didn't break any new ground. You can't

really say the same about Cruis'n the World. While it looks and plays much better, it's just a mildly enhanced version of the original.

SHELF LIFE

As we've said many times before, if you've played it in the arcade, don't expect it to last very long when you take it home; especially when it comes to racing games. Cruis'n the World is no exception. The addition of some special moves and short cuts distinguish it from its older brother, but don't do enough to enhance the shelf life.

CONCLUSION

Even if you have Cruis'n USA you're going to want to check out this sequel. It's a much better game than the original; the graphic and track design improvements alone, make it worthy of at least a rental. If you're an arcade style gamer, it's worth a purchase. While not the best racer on the platform, it does a good job of delivering decent variety with moderate challenge and a whole lot of fun.

ALEX

THE 64 SCORE				
GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONCEPT	SHELF LIFE
6	7	6	6	6

OVERALL SCORE 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

BIO FREAKS

CREATION DATE:
To check when your copy of Bio F.R.E.A.K.S. was created, quickly press the left C-Button immediately after you turn your system on. You will know if it is done correctly by the sound of someone laughing.

ONE HIT KILLS/FATALITIES:
These codes are for the default settings.
KEY:
T= Press the direction towards your opponent
A= Press the direction away from your opponent
LP=Left-C
RP=Up-C
LK=Down-C
RK=Right-C
FATALITIES:
MINATEK: Headspit T-A-LP+LK (close)
ZIPPERHEAD: BUZZCUT: T-A-A+RK (close once opponents arms are gone)
SSAPO: HEADEVOUR: T-A-A+RP+RK (close)
PSYCLOWN: CUT IN HALF: T-A-A+LP+LK (close)
SABOTAGE: DECAPIBLAST: T-A-A+RP (1-3 steps away once opponents arms are gone)
BULLZEYE: BACKHANDECAP:T-A-A+RP (close)
DELTA: TORSOSHEARS: T-A-A+LK (close)
PURGE: Mutilator: A-T-T+RP+RK

PAUSE SCREEN-SAVER:
During battle pause the game. Let it stay paused for a few minutes and a screen-saver will appear with the words "Game Paused" and flashing lights.

FIRST-PERSON FIGHT VIEW:
To switch into a first-person fight view press and hold left on the digital pad and then press the start button. To switch back, press and hold down on the digital pad and then press the start button. The code can only be performed once a fight has started.

MORTAL KOMBAT 4

ALTERNATE COLORS AND WEAPONS:
To alternate any Characters outfit at the character select screen hold start and hit any button. If you do this on any character it will change everybody's outfit. Some characters have three outfits while some other characters have four.

OFF ROAD CHALLENGE

EL CAJON TRACK:
To access El Cajon hold Up on the controller and press the L button and the R button at the same time. You should hear an air wrench if it worked. To play the El Cajon track select El Paso and hold the Z button and press the gas button.
FLAGSTAFF TRACK:
When you're at the track selection screen hold Left on the controller and press the L button to access the hidden Flagstaff track. You should hear a sound of an air wrench if it worked. To actually play the Flagstaff track select Mojave and hold the Z button and press the gas button.
GUADALUPE TRACK:
To access Guadalupe hold Down on the controller and press the R button. To play the Guadalupe track select Vegas and Hold the Z button and press the gas button.
MONSTER TRUCKS:
To get monster trucks, press one of the following buttons once at the car select screen. Press again to show the default truck:
PUNISHER: Down-C
4X4 MONSTER: Up-C
THUNDERBOLT: Left-C
THE CRUSHER: Right-C

FORSAKEN

ACCESS ALL MISSIONS CODE:
On the PRESS START screen press A, R, Z, Up, Up, C-Up, C-Down and C-Down. The screen should say MISSIONS OPEN and you will now be able to access all levels. Simply start a Single Player game and select the mission you want to play.
GORE MODE:
To play the game in Gore mode perform the following: At the 'Press Start' screen press: Z, Down on directional pad, C-Up, C-Left, C-Left, C-Left, C-Left, C-Down.
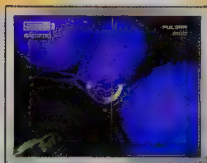
PSYCHEDELIC MODE:
To play the game in Psychedelic mode, which makes levels continuously change colors, perform the following: At the 'Press Start' screen press: A, R, left, right, down, C-Up, C-Left, C-Down.

TURBO CRAZY MODE:
To play the game in "Turbo Crazy" mode, which enables unlimited nitro boosts, perform the following: At the 'Press Start' screen press: B, B, R, up, left, down, C-Up, C-left.
WIRE-FRAME MODE:
To play the game in Wire-Frame mode perform the following.

At the 'Press Start' screen press: L, L, R, Z, left, right, C-Up, C-Right.

CRUISIN' WORLD

CHANGE PAINT JOB:
In one or two player mode, when you select your car, use L and R to change the color of the car's body.

FLIP ROLL:
Execute a normal flip during a jump, then press B, B, A, B, C-Up to roll in mid-air. You'll earn 20 points each time you do this.

SECRET CARS:
Here's how to get the secret cars. Go to the practice mode and pick "practice championship". Beat the following tracks in less than the posted times to get the cars.

TRACK	TIME	CAR
Australia	1:49	Surgeon
China	1:14	Enforcer
Egypt	1:07	Skool Bus
England	1:46	Bulldog
France	2:15	Tommy
Germany	2:27	Taxi
Hawaii	3:47	Monsta
Japan	2:48	Rocket
Kenya	2:06	Conductor
Mexico	1:46	Howler
New York	2:11	Grass Hopper
Russia	1.58	Rocket

DEADLY ARTS

PLAY AS GOURKI:
To play as the sub-boss, press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, B, A at the title screen.

PLAY AS REIJI:
To play as the final boss, press A, B, Right, Left, Right, Left, Down

GEX

TITANIC LEVEL: GEQUES COUSTEAU:
At the beginninging of the game, before the first arch. Climb p the arch, get to the top, and take the platform over to the secret Titanic level.

ULTIMATE PASSWORD:
For 99 lives and all the remotes, enter the password "M758FQRW3J58FQRW4!" You must enter this password exactly, including the exclamation point at the end.

IGGY'S RECKIN' BALLS

CHEAT CODES:
Enter these codes on the password screen. To access the Password screen, press R and Z on the title screen.
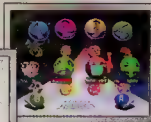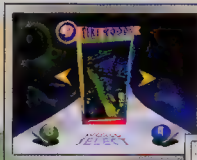
ALL TRACKS:
THEUNIVERSE
ALL CHARACTERS EXCEPT IGGY'S GIRLFRIEND:
HAPPYHEADS
ROLLERBALL LAST TWICE AS LONG AS USUAL:
2TIMES
ICE PLATFORMS:
ICEPRINCESS
GOO PLATFORMS:
GOOEYGOOGOO
LEVEL SELECT AT PAUSE SCREEN:
JUMPAROUND
ADDS DIFFERENT ACCESSORIES TO YOUR CHARACTER:
SWOPSHOP
FULL TURBOS:
GOBABY
FAT RECKIN' BALLS:
TOOMUCHPIE
NON-STOP ROLLER BALL:
NONSTOP
USE THE TUROK 2 EFFECTS ENGINE:
2ROKTOO
PEN AND INK MODE:
ROLFHARRIS
REALLY TINY GUYS:
MICROBALLS

NFL BLITZ

BONUS PLAYERS:
Enter these codes at the Enter Initials screen.

PLAYER	NAME	CODE
Mark Turmell	Turmell	0322
Sal Divita	al	0201

The meek
may inherit
the earth,
but we strongly
suggest they
stay off our
playing field.

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3-Time NFL MVP

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